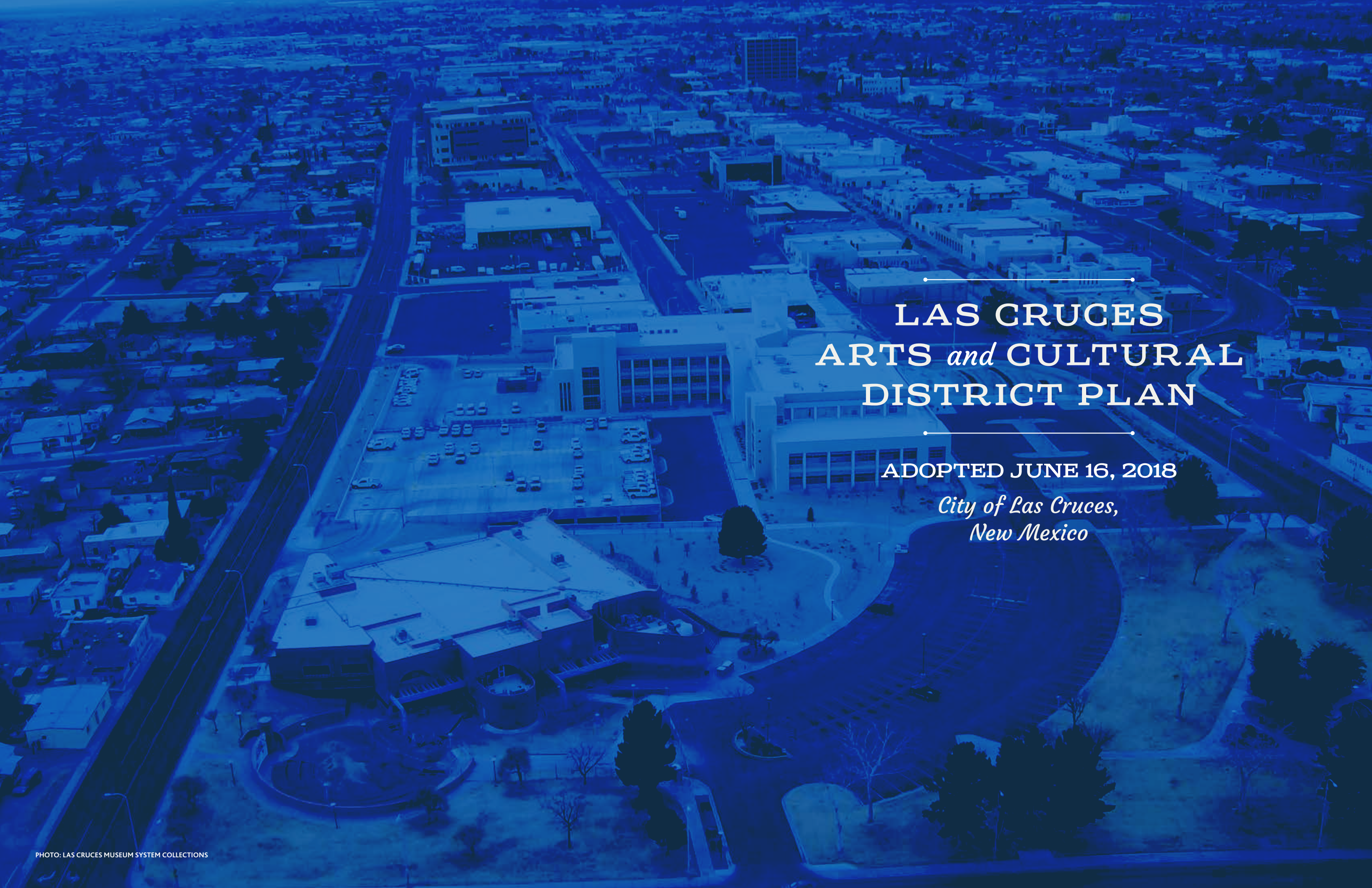




LAS CRUCES ARTS & CULTURAL DISTRICT

the creative heart of our city



An aerial photograph of the Las Cruces city center, showing a grid of streets, various buildings, and a large parking lot. The image is overlaid with a solid blue color. The text is positioned on the right side of the image.

LAS CRUCES ARTS *and* CULTURAL DISTRICT PLAN

ADOPTED JUNE 16, 2018

*City of Las Cruces,
New Mexico*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to all who participated in preparing this community arts and cultural district plan. It truly was a collaborative effort with some 700 community residents representing 15 participant categories from throughout the city. The commitment of the City Council and the Arts and Cultural District Coordinating Council has resulted in a plan that is unique to Las Cruces and reflects its history and culture.

CITY COUNCIL

Ken Miyagishima, Mayor
Kasandra Gandara, District 1
Greg Smith, District 2
Gabriel Vasquez, District 3
Jack Eakman, District 4
Gill Sorg, District 5
Yvonne Flores, District 6

CITY MANAGER

Stuart C. Ed

PROJECT STAFF

Andy Hume, City staff,
Economic Development Department
Armando Morales, City staff,
Economic Development Department

ARTS & CULTURAL DISTRICT COORDINATING COUNCIL

Kathleen Albers, Executive Director,
Doña Ana Arts Council
David Chavez, Mesquite Neighborhood
Representative and Historic
Preservation Advocate
Mike Cook, Journalist and Theatre Artist
Garland Courts, Museum Manager
(Operations), Quality of Life Department
Wayne Carl Huber, Visual Artist and
Vice President, Alameda
Depot Neighborhood Association
Andy Hume, City staff, Economic
Development Department (ACD Chair)

Jennifer Garcia Kozlowski,
Executive Director, Downtown
Las Cruces Partnership
Marisa Sage, Director,
University Art Gallery, NMSU
Rebecca Slaughter,
Museum System Administrator,
Quality of Life Department
Kathleen Squires, Visual Artist,
Arts Leader/Advocate (ex-officio)
Elizabeth Vega, Visit Las Cruces,
Economic Development Department

Past members who served 2017 and earlier:

Robert Caldwell, City staff,
Parks and Recreation Department
Carrie D. LaTour,
Former Executive Director,
Downtown Las Cruces Partnership
Beth O'Leary, Retired NMSU
Professor, History/Archaeology
Irene Oliver-Lewis, Retired Arts
Administrator/Educator, Theatre Artist

Arianna Parsons,
Former Executive Director,
Downtown Las Cruces Partnership
Cruz Ramos, City staff,
Economic Development Department
Jennifer Robles, City staff,
City of Las Cruces Museum System

SPECIAL THANKS

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The work of these past city officials
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6 City Councilor 2013-2017; Olga
Padroza, District 3 City Councilor
2009-2017; Miguel Silva, District 1
City Councilor 2007-2016; and Robert
Garza, City Manager 2011-2016. A
special "mil gracias" to former Mayor
Ruben A. Smith, community leader
Heather Pollard, and architect Steve
Newby who have worked on the
revitalization of Downtown Las Cruces/
Main Street since 1994.

CONSULTING TEAM

SVPratt Creative Strategies,
Santa Fe, New Mexico
Sabrina Pratt, Owner
Irene Oliver-Lewis, Associate
Graphic Design by Firestik Studio,
Santa Fe, New Mexico

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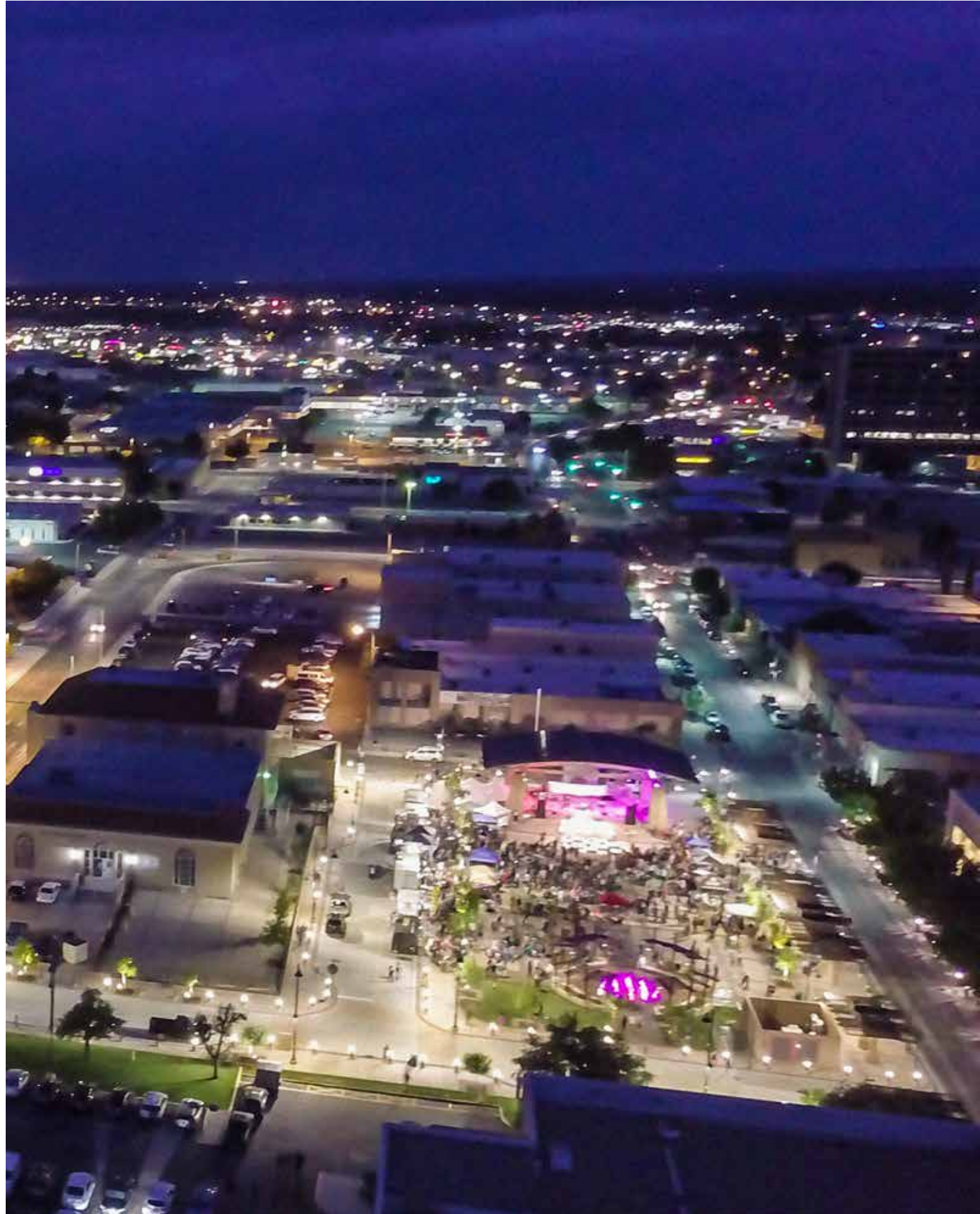
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After years of growth, Las Cruces is at a juncture where it can distinguish itself as a cultural destination. Arts, culture, and maker activities are percolating throughout the community, demonstrating creative production and artistry. Residents of Las Cruces value their contributions to the widely recognized arts and culture of New Mexico and are working to gain more recognition of their community, its history, and its unique cultural assets by imagining and implementing visionary creative potential. ▶ ▶ ▶

THE ROLE *that arts and cultural districts play in providing a vibrant and appealing environment is a major factor in retaining young citizens and their families, attracting a diverse, well-educated and creative workforce, and positioning the community as a cultural tourist destination. Arts and cultural districts bring citizens out from their homes and into a vibrant social space to interact and bond with their families and neighbors; and the community's young talent is showcased and recognized as part of the cultural landscape.*

New Mexico Arts
and Cultural Districts
Steering Committee Guide

The Las Cruces Arts and Cultural District Plan creates an Arts and Cultural District (ACD) that establishes Las Cruces as a compelling focal point of the border region in southern New Mexico. The ACD brings New Mexico's second largest city into prominence as fun and educational to visit repeatedly because it is a lively place with many things to see and do. The ACD is authentic, evolving as a crossroads of southern New Mexico, in a unique location, with influences from the Mesilla Valley and the great state of New Mexico, plus nearby West Texas and Mexico. The ACD features art, culture, heritage, and entertainment with a broad definition of culture that brings in science, sports, food, and drink. The purpose of the ACD Plan is to create sustainability for Las Cruces' downtown core and original townsite as a place to live, work, shop, and spend leisure time.

For the ACD, citizens want, "A destination for all ages, making downtown more exciting," and "Happiness—a place to spend leisure time with friends and family." Many think it should be a destination that has cultural distinction and inspires community pride. A constant theme is how to attract college students and youth downtown.

A planning process led by City of Las Cruces and community representatives serving on the Arts and Cultural District Coordinating Council (ACDCC) resulted in this five-year plan, complete with vision and goals, identified partners and resources, and implementation strategies. The ACD Plan was developed with community and stakeholder participation in 2017-18 for approval

by the City Council in 2018. The Las Cruces Arts and Cultural District Plan is coordinated with the Las Cruces Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Master Plan.

THE VISION STATEMENT

"The Las Cruces Arts and Cultural District is a vibrant, inspirational, diverse, and asset-rich cultural environment with collective economic and quality of life benefits."

This vision will be realized through a new focus on Las Cruces' historic 1849 townsite as a modern day center of Border Art and Culture. Chapter 1, **CONTEXT AND VISION**, includes the ACD boundary map (page 18), illustrating the rich concentration of cultural assets that are the foundation of building new vibrancy in the historic town center. Main Street is a remarkable center of museums, theatres, businesses, and cultural events. The Mesquite Street-Original Townsite Historic District (Mesquite Street Historic District) is the largest neighborhood of extant adobe homes from Texas to California. Throughout these areas, the Mesilla Valley, and the surrounding border region, are diverse and artistic individuals and organizations. These elements come together in the ACD, a unique, dynamic location and compelling focal point to experience Border Art and Culture.

The chapter covers the context of creating an arts and cultural district within the guidelines of the New Mexico Arts and Cultural District Program, and how that will be accomplished through creative placemaking.



PHOTOS (L TO R): DOWNTOWN LAS CRUCES PARTNERSHIP, EMMITT BOOHER

THE ACTION PLAN, in Chapter 2, is organized according to four goals. **Foster Economic Growth** focuses on the creative economy with an identity for the ACD as the center of Border Art and Culture. Physical improvements create a safe and aesthetically pleasing environment. Major new artist/maker spaces are proposed to expand possibilities for the sale and presentation of locally produced goods.

Improve the Community's Quality of Life enlivens the ACD with people and events, attracts artists with affordable live/work housing, and adds to the momentum started by the Plaza de Las Cruces to create a year-round schedule of events.

Honor and Promote Las Cruces History and Culture celebrates Las Cruces history and culture, brings youth into the ACD, and offers informal and formal education.

Community Engagement & Implementation implements the

ACD Plan with shared leadership, uses collaboration and partnerships to engage the community, and develops multiple funding sources.

ILLUSTRATING CREATIVE PLACEMAKING, the third chapter, provides some examples of creative placemaking and expansion on actions proposed in the Action Plan. Included are ideas about how a variety of resources will come together to make the project happen and how the ACDCC will develop and execute catalyzing programs.

Shared leadership from the City of Las Cruces, Downtown Las Cruces Partnership, and Doña Ana Arts Council is central to implementation. Administration of the ACD Plan will be by the ACDCC and the Downtown Las Cruces Partnership. Many other entities have partnership roles, such as NMSU, non-profits training and consulting with entrepreneurs, arts organizations, and business owners. The ACD Plan presents actions to attract a range of diverse people and entities who will

see something they want to be part of, resulting in community participation and implementation on many levels. Funding strategies and sources are discussed in Chapter 2, Chapter 3, and Appendix 5.

- The ACD Plan proposes to:
- Make the ACD the new, exciting and ever-changing center of the public's participation in arts and cultural activity in the Mesilla Valley.
 - Grow the creative economy and tourism for the benefit of the entire community.
 - Create a unique identity by showcasing the unique confluence of Border Art and Culture that arises from Las Cruces' place and history in New Mexico and the international border region.
 - Create sustainability for Las Cruces' downtown core and the Mesquite Street Historic District as a place to live, work, shop, and spend leisure time. 🌸

CHAPTER 1

CONTEXT *and* VISION



WHY AN ARTS AND CULTURAL DISTRICT IN LAS CRUCES?

In 2014, an ACD Task Force was formed to explore opportunities to create an ACD in Las Cruces. The Task Force was anchored by the Doña Ana Arts Council, Downtown Las Cruces Partnership, and the City. In 2015, the Task Force re-formed into a cross-sector, 11-member ACD Coordinating Council and began developing the first “municipally-designated” ACD in New Mexico. The Council researched the designated New Mexico districts, national trends, and outcomes of other districts, and determined that the establishment of a unique cultural identity was paramount. ▶ ▶ ▶

THE NEW MEXICO ACD PROGRAM was started in 2007 by the state legislature. According to the ACD website, “The program is an inter-agency collaboration ... directed toward place-based economic development focusing on the unique cultural and arts assets of each authorized district.” New Mexico cities with state-authorized Arts and Cultural Districts include:

Central or
Downtown
Albuquerque

Artesia

Gallup

Las Vegas

Los Alamos

Mora Plaza as an
Arts and Cultural
Compound

Raton
Historic
Downtown

Silver City

Taos

Las Cruces has an abundance of high quality arts creation, arts organizations, and artists. The ACD helps the community build on the existing arts in education programs for youth and young adults in the local schools, arts charter high school, community college, and the university. They determined that the ACD had to be authentic; showcase the city's historic, cultural, and artistic assets; include participation from all sectors; and be community and artist led.

The purpose of the creation of the Arts and Cultural District is to focus engaged stakeholders under the unified vision of establishing a cultural identity for Las Cruces. The community's shared core beliefs are that Las Cruces is rich in cultural, historical, and artistic assets including, but not limited to:

- Our history/our unique story
- Our food

- Our talented populace
- Our natural landscapes and resources
- Our unique perspectives as a border region
- Our architecture

They focused on three major components of a state ACD:

1. The conservation, preservation, and interpretation of the artistic, cultural, and historic assets that distinguish a "place."
2. Focus on local artists, artisans, cultural entrepreneurs, arts institutions, and businesses that make a "place" vibrant, vital, and economically relevant.
3. The physical and cultural resources of the "place," which hold the amenities that visitors/tourists seek in a cultural or artistic experience like lodging, dining, shops, galleries, public art, museums, and

entertainment.

The ACD recognizes and further develops a cultural identity that highlights the diverse cultural expressions of the region, honors the historic past embodied in the Mesquite Street Historic District and historic downtown buildings, and embraces today's arts and cultural creations. The ACD is a destination for all ages and communities, where friends, family, and tourists can enjoy leisure time with memorable, alternative, traditional, and complex arts and cultural opportunities. It solidifies Las Cruces' cultural identity using the City's history from 1849 as the foundation.

That's why an Arts and Culture District is established in Las Cruces, endowing the City with a new sense of artistic "place." 🌵

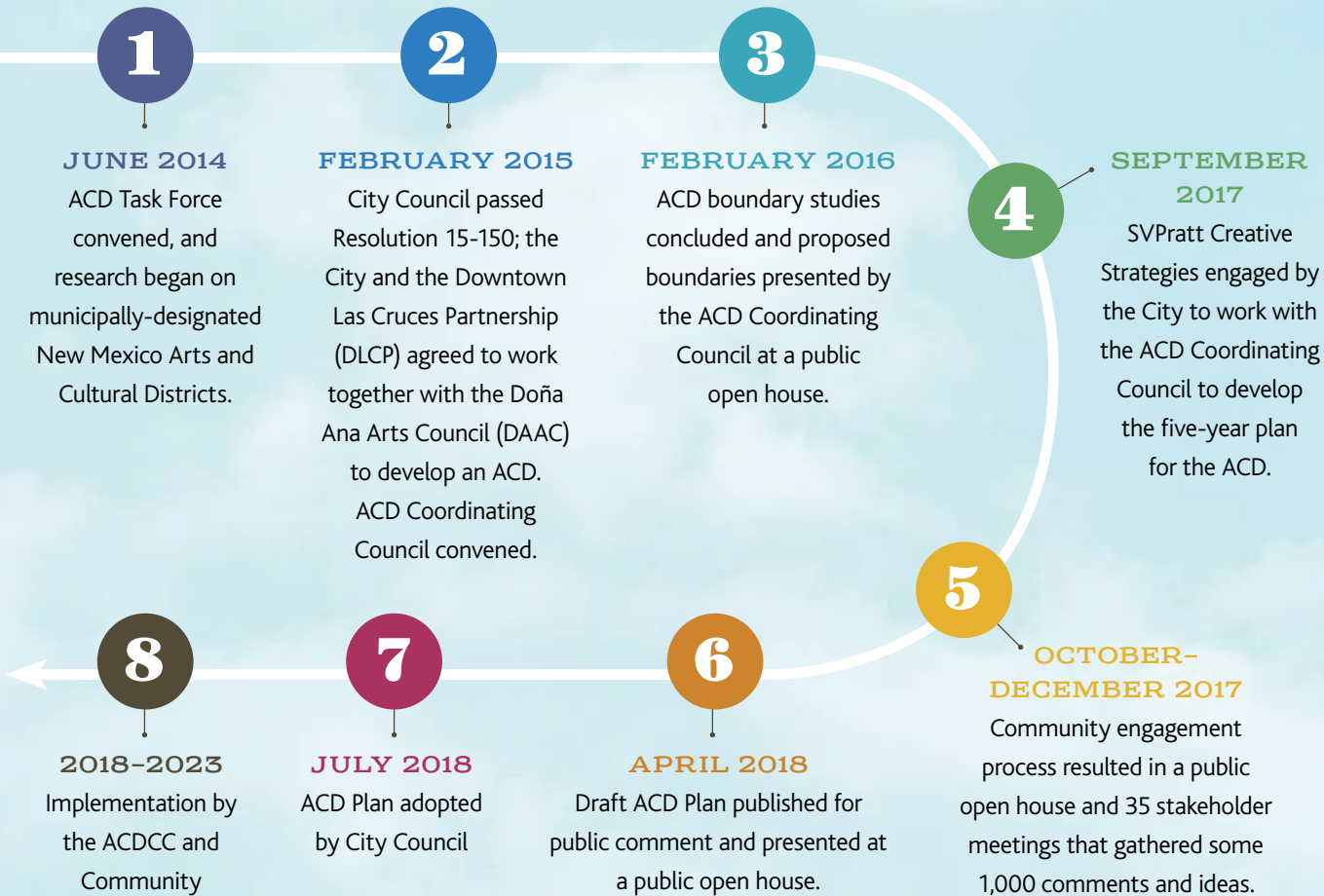


THE PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process was structured to collect ideas for creative placemaking throughout the community and to develop cross-sector collaboration for implementation of the ACD Plan. Cross-sector collaboration is an essential tool for cities today. In a guest post on the National League of Cities website, Neil Britto of the Intersector Project writes that "critical challenges facing our communities today are unsolvable, or at least not easily solvable, by single-sector efforts." As cities experience declining budgets, public-private relationships are evolving to be not only transactional, but relational.

Planning was led by the 11-member Arts and Cultural District Coordinating Council (ACDCC) which has seven community representatives and four City staff members. This cross-sector collaborative group has been and continues to be a network of individuals and organizations that brings the community together in the ACD.

Leading the way, the Mayor, City Councilors, and City Manager have made authentic community participation a major component in all City plans (see ACDCC members in Acknowledgments).





TRANSFORMING DOWNTOWN

Transformation of downtown from the unsuccessful 1967 urban renewal to a thriving business, entertainment, and residential area has been underway since planning and studies started in 1994. The ACD Plan is a new layer that creates a vibrant social and economic space that extends throughout the Main Street area and the Mesquite Street Historic District.

Five studies commissioned by the City have resulted in significant changes, including:

- a St. Genevieve Memorial
- new municipal government facilities
- landscaping
- new transit facilities and routes
- the re-establishment of two-way streets
- renovation of the Rio Grande Theatre
- the Plaza de Las Cruces
- renovation of the callecitas off Main Street, as this plan is written

The 2018-2023 Las Cruces Arts and Cultural District Plan complements and

fulfills aspects of these plans to create an artful, creative environment:

- **the City's Comprehensive Plan**, which has four components—a Healthy Community, Community Character, Economic Prosperity, and Sustainable Growth, and
- **the City's Downtown Master Plan** that addresses the infrastructure and physical environment of Main Street and the surrounding areas.

The ACD Plan also supports the City of Las Cruces Mission Statement: *The Mission of the City of Las Cruces is to provide customer-focused municipal services to residents, businesses, and*

guests so they can experience a "quality of place" to live, work and play.

In the Action Plan, starting on page 24, linkages/connections between this plan and the already established ones, are documented with each goal. The City's restructuring of its departments and their responsibilities to bring new vitality to downtown is a key factor in meeting the City's goals for economic development. Implementation of the Action Plan depends on the involvement of the Quality of Life and Economic Development departments as well as other city departments. 🌸



PHOTO: NMCO MEDIA



CREATIVE PLACEMAKING AS A TOOL OF REVITALIZATION

The development of the Arts and Cultural District is planned through creative placemaking strategies such as collaboration and partnerships, sharing of financial resources and artistic resources, coalescing engaging activities, and building on existing cultural assets.

Las Cruces is leaping forward by promoting burgeoning cultural activities that are spread throughout the region. New awareness of the ACD as a cultural destination is building as the community produces new events, starts new businesses, opens new food outlets, and enjoys time downtown. As awareness and attention to creative placemaking becomes a conscious process, more creative production and artistry occurs in the ACD. ▶ ▶ ▶

A way of coalescing the current creative activity is to use the innovative concept of creative placemaking to establish a thriving ACD. Some hallmarks of creative placemaking are:

- It uses arts and cultural assets to influence character, investment in a city or neighborhood, and economic development.
- It also integrates a social component of “making places” based on art, culture, and historic preservation for neighborhoods and the people.
- It builds community, and inspires and creates energy, liveliness, excitement, fun, and joy while improving public spaces and structures.
- It is a cross-sector partnership between government, private investors, funders, artists, makers, arts organizations, arts and culture institutions, schools, businesses, and citizens.

The result is not only increased quality of life for citizens, but elements put in place to spur the nascent creative economy. The “creative economy” is a principle introduced by British economist John Howkins in 2001. It has grown in interest internationally as a recognized economy based on creative people, industries, and cities. Howkins and other economists find that the creative economy is revitalizing manufacturing, service, retailing, and the entertainment industries.

The arts and cultural industries and professions at the core of the creative

economy are visual art, literature, theatre, dance, music, culinary arts, film/media/digital technology, architecture, tourism, advertising, historic preservation and heritage sectors. As the creative economy concept has grown, it has broadened to include makers, which encompasses artisans making beer, specialty food products, spirits, and products that contribute to a customer’s lifestyle.

The assets of the creative economy are present and ready to come into relationship with each other to create an exciting environment. By concentrating them in the ACD, a new artful environment will emerge. Creative placemaking tools to be used are shared leadership, sharing of

financial resources, making changes to the physical environment, and infusing a spirit of collaboration and enthusiasm in the community.

What are examples of creative placemaking? Las Cruces has already begun by making extensive physical improvements to Main Street and building the Plaza de Las Cruces. See page 56 to understand how the Plaza is changing downtown. An example on a smaller scale is the “Color Me Cruces” mural on the Insta-Copy building on Main Street. The story of collaboration and shared resources that made it possible is on page 54. These changes and others are within the boundaries of the Las Cruces Arts and Cultural District, setting the stage for new vibrancy. 🌸



PHOTO: DOWNTOWN LAS CRUCES PARTNERSHIP



LAS CRUCES ARTS AND CULTURAL DISTRICT BOUNDARY MAP

The Arts and Cultural District is set within the original town that was founded by Don Pablo Melendres and platted in 1849 by U.S. Army surveyors, led by Lt. Delos Sackett, using a rawhide rope. The ACD boundaries were created not with a rope, but with input from the community, six ACD boundary studies using Geographic Information Systems software, and much thought by the ACDCC in accordance with state guidelines.

THE NEW MEXICO ARTS AND CULTURAL DISTRICTS PROGRAM GUIDELINES INCLUDE:

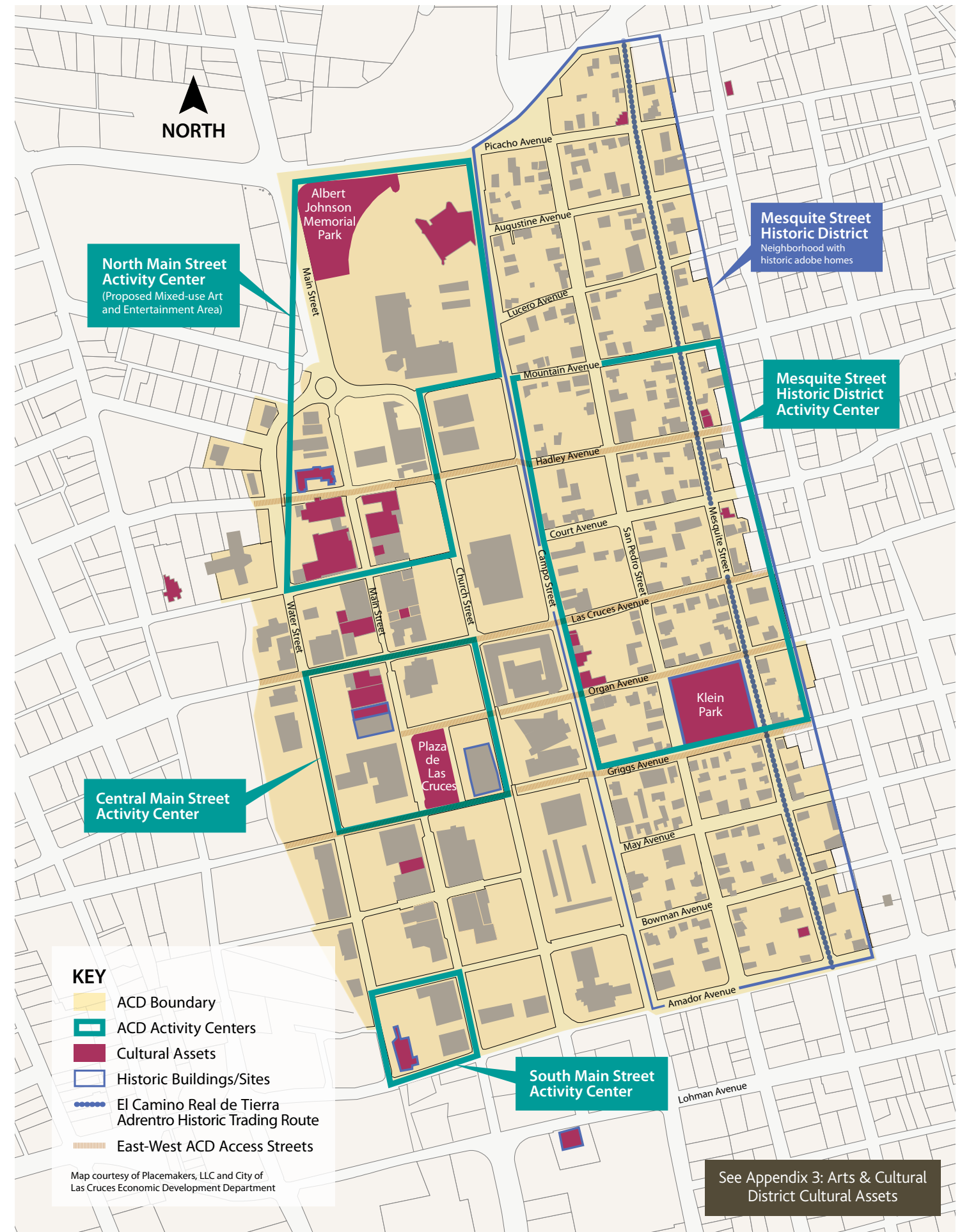
- a walkable area
- a municipally-adopted district Master Plan/Metropolitan Redevelopment Plan
- a critical mass of assets dedicated to the creative and/or cultural economy and the cultural community
- district size which can be managed and enhanced with funding and resources and is the focus for new projects
- a district which becomes an arts and cultural destination utilizing place-based economic development strategies to enhance the experience of the assets

In the future, the ACDCC will consider areas outside the district boundaries that might be complementary "cultural compounds," as cohesive groups of cultural buildings and facilities come about. (See Appendix 1 for further definition.)

At the center of the district is the new Plaza de Las Cruces, which opened in September 2016. Showing great progress toward community goals for a vibrant downtown, the new Plaza is thriving with activity like the New Year's Chile Drop, NMSU pep rallies, symphonies, festivals, concerts, Saturday morning yoga, and the lively Farmers and Crafts Market. The current cultural and art activities are channeling the excitement and community spirit of times past on this historic site. 🌻

THE DISTRICT CURRENTLY CONTAINS:

21 arts assets—museums, galleries, theatres; 1 library; 14 restaurants, 1 coffee house; 27 arts-complementary businesses; 8 historic buildings/sites and at least 100 homes or buildings built from 1870 to the 1950's, which are listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the State Register of Cultural Properties.





BUILDING ON A CULTURAL LEGACY STARTED IN 1849

“What is Las Cruces Culture?” was a question asked of community members at an ACD open house in October 2017. The answers were: diverse, multicultural, friendly, historic, complex, authentic, inclusive, ethnic, vibrant, home, and family. Diverse was the most repeated word, followed by a similar one—multicultural.

These answers reflect that culture comes from the people, who are historically international, starting with the indigenous residents, the Manso, Piro, and Tiwa Pueblo Indians, and the first townsites settlers, a surprising multicultural mix including Mexican, Spanish, Jewish, Scottish, French, and German. Today Las Cruces is 59.6% Hispanic/Mexican, 34.4% Anglo, 2.6% African American, 2.6% Asian, and 0.7% Native American. It is a city of 101,759 people in a county of 214,000, with

14,000 students enrolled at New Mexico State University, in a border region of almost 3 million people.

Residents of Las Cruces value their contributions to the widely recognized arts and culture of New Mexico. However, they would like more recognition of their community, its history, and its unique cultural assets. Achieving that recognition will come about by making the major assets more visible and active. The major asset

groups for the Arts and Cultural District are the diverse and artistic community members residing in the Mesilla Valley and the border region; the Mesquite Street Historic District, which is the largest neighborhood of extant adobe homes from Texas to California; and Main Street, a remarkable center of museums, theatres, businesses and cultural events. These assets come together as a dynamic location and access point for Border Art and Culture.



DIVERSE AND ARTISTIC COMMUNITY MEMBERS

It is a true asset to have such a diverse community. Early settlers entertained themselves with music and dance, and today the same is happening on the Plaza and in the parks. The ACD Plan proposes to amplify that activity, integrating the talents and skills that have accumulated through the generations. The foundation is cultural traditions like mariachi festivals and celebrations like the New Year's Eve Chile Drop.

Today the rich mix of people includes youth, community college and university students, active artists associations, and film/media/digital artists, all of whom have talents to share if given the opportunity (see page 67 for more on cultural legacy). Ongoing collaborations between these groups allow for varied creative placemaking experiences.

Imagine strolling the ACD where young African drummers perform while a youth visual artist accompanies the music with a drawing inspired by the rhythm. You turn the corner at a callecita and find a “pop up” of artist demonstrations from

graff/hip hop art to Native American drum making. You stop at the ice cream kiosk before you get to Klein Park for a fiesta complete with an outdoor Ranchera dance lessons; wine, beer, and chile food booths; arts and crafts; and a concert premiering a new digital/salsa fusion band. You end the evening at the coffee shop with a hot cup of Organ Mountain blend.

THE MESQUITE STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

It has been said that history is personal, and that is evident in the Mesquite Street neighborhood. The remarkable adobe structures date back to the time of founder Don Pablo Melendres, Mayor of Doña Ana, and are full of family histories and stories. The view of the mountains was important to the surveyors and settlers of the 1849 town and they built a direct view of the Organ Mountains from every avenue that had an east/west direction.

Some of the businesses on Mesquite Street date back 50 years. The street is the actual road of the famous El Camino Real trading route from 1598 into the mid-1900's. Elders still relate stories handed down from their

parents of the cobblestone street, carriages, and goods that were brought by the Spaniards. It is a street of eclectic storefronts from galleries and cafés to plumbing repair shops, with a growing number of creative economy businesses like filmmakers, graphic designers, and tattoo artists.

Great-great grandchildren of the settlers still live in the adobe homes of their ancestors and carry on family history and traditions. The Native American youth of the Piro, Manso, Tiwa pueblos still dance at the yearly religious ceremonies. Klein Park, built in 1953, is becoming a focal point of community gathering from large scale events to community youth groups practicing T-ball and ballet folklórico. Several neighborhood groups use the park for yearly events. One group has revitalized the Pachanga, a traditional Mexican festival that was very popular in the 1950's, then called Fiesta de Las Cruces. They have kept the foods, arts and crafts, games that are part of the traditions and added a lowrider car show that draws thousands of visitors. Another group holds a Winterfest with Santa and Mrs. Claus distributing goods to the local children and youth.



PHOTO: DOWNTOWN LAS CRUCES PARTNERSHIP

MAIN STREET

Main Street was the heart of the city from 1849 until the mid-1960's. It was the place where the community came to shop, eat, socialize, and have concerts, dances, and plays on the plaza of St. Genevieve's Catholic Church. The elders of the neighborhood would meet daily to discuss the 'affairs of the world' and watch the people and cars go by. In the 1960's it was the site of the first play by the Las Cruces Community Theatre. You could gather at the post office, pay your utility bills at City Hall, have a soda and hamburger, go to the movies at the Rio Grande, State, or Plaza theatres, or buy the latest fashion. There was always something to do on Main Street or downtown for community members of all ages and cultural backgrounds.

A resurgence of the downtown is in place and many of the historic buildings are being used for arts and culture. The renovated post office is planned to become the City's Museum of Art in 2022-23. The Rio Grande Theatre is a

focal point of community and national performance groups, The State Theater is home of the Las Cruces Community Theatre and the Plaza Theatre is now Mas Art Frame and Art Supplies.

Plaza de Las Cruces opened September 2016 complete with a stage and a 1,461 person seating capacity, an interactive water feature, and a tile sundial. The number and variety of events held there is growing every year, adding new energy and bringing the community back downtown. The success as a community venue plays tribute to the historic significance of the site holding countless cultural events from 1857 to 1967 and symbolically heals the destruction of St. Genevieve's Catholic Church, torn down during urban renewal.

The ACD is anchored on the north by the city's three museums, City Hall, and the library. The southern anchor is the new Amador Plaza that houses the Visit Las Cruces office, three restaurants, performance venues, shops, and the historic Amador Hotel building.

Today, Main Street is becoming the cultural and creative economy business center of the city dating back to generations of historical significance.

THE FUTURE ASSET — BORDER ART AND CULTURE

A new Las Cruces asset is still in development. Outside Las Cruces, the diverse border region is not well recognized. It has great potential, not only for enriching the cultural life of Las Cruces citizens, but enriching the economy. The unique geographic position of Las Cruces offers a distinctive cultural mix and a large population of potential visitors similar to the populations that traveled El Camino Real, from Chihuahua, Mexico, to Juarez and El Paso, Texas. The area of Las Cruces, El Paso, and Juarez is now called the Borderplex. The city's ACD is poised to highlight the geographical and cultural connections of present and past.

Changes to the downtown physical infrastructure, including improvements to the streets, the new Plaza, and historic buildings, have set the stage for new activity including an active business sector and arts and culture draw, as it was historically. There is growing recognition that the ACD area is coming back as the creative heart of the city and an economic center. It has the potential to bring the community to the ACD to have fun, socialize, collaborate, relieve stress, and experience current and historical arts and culture. By coalescing the arts and cultural activity of the region in the ACD, Las Cruces has a fabulous new asset. 🌻

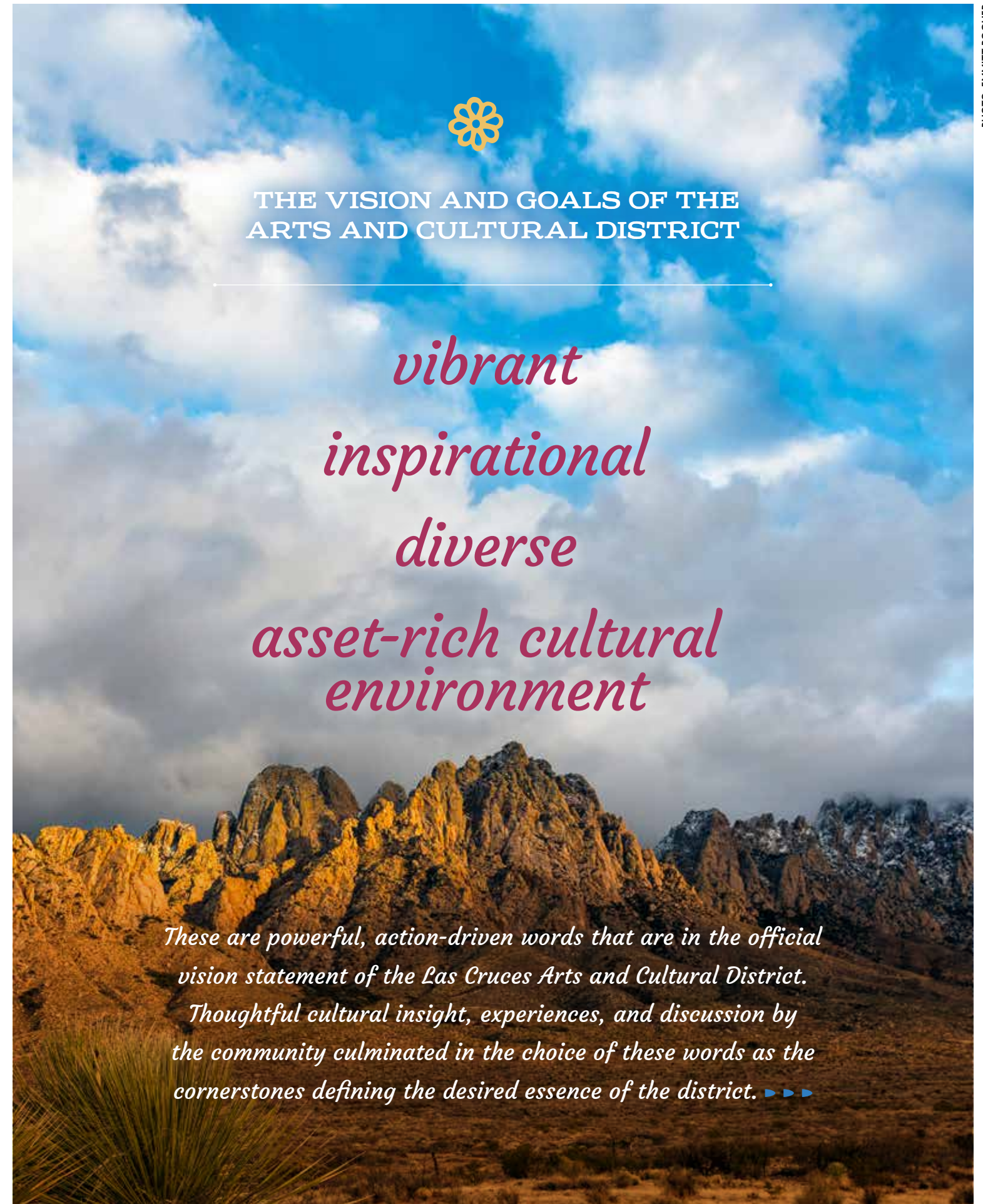


PHOTO: EMMITT BOOHER

THE VISION AND GOALS OF THE ARTS AND CULTURAL DISTRICT

*vibrant
inspirational
diverse
asset-rich cultural
environment*

These are powerful, action-driven words that are in the official vision statement of the Las Cruces Arts and Cultural District. Thoughtful cultural insight, experiences, and discussion by the community culminated in the choice of these words as the cornerstones defining the desired essence of the district. ▶▶▶

A vision statement is the compass of a project. It directs expectations and outcomes for the future. The full vision statement is:

“The Las Cruces Arts and Cultural District is a vibrant, inspirational, diverse, and asset-rich cultural environment with collective economic and quality of life benefits.”

Collective economic and quality of life benefits will come from creative placemaking and the creative economy.

GOAL 1 – FOSTER ECONOMIC GROWTH

The first goal of the ACD Plan is to stimulate economic growth by making physical improvements, bringing the arts and business together, and thinking both locally and internationally.

GOAL 2 – IMPROVE THE COMMUNITY’S QUALITY OF LIFE

Enlivening the district with people and events by attracting artists with affordable live/work housing, and keeping the momentum started by the Plaza to create a year-round schedule of events on the Plaza and throughout the district are the main points of this goal.

GOAL 3 – HONOR AND PROMOTE LAS CRUCES HISTORY & CULTURE

Goal 3 celebrates Las Cruces history and culture, brings youth into the district, and offers informal and formal education. Throughout the community engagement process, the value of sharing Las Cruces history was consistently raised.

GOAL 4 – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

How the community and funding will come together to carry out the ACD Plan are central to this goal. The ACD Coordinating Council and the Downtown Las Cruces Partnership, which is already under contract with the City of Las Cruces, will be in the lead.

The ACD vision is a living and organic reality that materializes collective creative economy, creative placemaking, and quality of life benefits. It will take the entire community to ensure its success. **EVERYONE** (artists, makers, arts organizations, cultural institutions, elected officials, investors, neighbors in the historic districts, business leaders, entrepreneurs, tourists, educators, and community members) has the capacity to be an advocate, or a producer, or a consumer of the arts and culture products, events, food, and activities in the district.

Embrace and be a part of the vision of the Las Cruces, asset-rich, arts and culture district.

Place the 1849 town settlers in your heart and honor the foundation and legacy they left us. 🌻



PHOTO: BREE LAMB

CHAPTER 2

ACTION PLAN
for the **LAS CRUCES ARTS AND CULTURAL DISTRICT**
2018–2023

Making the ACD a Vibrant Place

PHOTO: LAS CRUCES MUSEUM SYSTEM COLLECTIONS

VISION

The Las Cruces Arts and Cultural District is a vibrant, inspirational, diverse, and asset-rich cultural environment with collective economic and quality of life benefits.



GOAL 1
FOSTER ECONOMIC
GROWTH

A sustainable creative economy contributes to the total economic framework of the community and develops diverse businesses and a creative professional workforce.

- Provide the environment that attracts and sustains businesses, entrepreneurs, college students, and a skilled workforce.
- Create art spaces and re-use vacant district spaces to contribute to revitalization and revenue generation.
- Generate jobs in art and cultural production, construction, retail businesses, and the food industry.
- Provide a foundation for cultural tourism that creates experiences and products that can be broadly marketed.
- Increase earned income opportunities to allow artists, arts and cultural organizations, and commercial arts enterprises to thrive.
- Help local youth and college graduates to stay in Las Cruces and make a living.

See pages 30-34 for actions that address these objectives.

GOAL 2
IMPROVE THE
COMMUNITY'S
QUALITY OF LIFE

Increased arts and culture activities in an artful physical environment cultivate community and creative opportunities for all ages.

- Foster a strong sense of place through increased opportunities to be a member of the community, enjoying cultural events, dining out, socializing with friends and neighbors, and volunteering.
- Engender responsibility for the physical environment by recognizing the value of public art, architecture, landscaping, and attractive public spaces.
- Enliven the district through learning centers, galleries, community theatres, and making artists more present by building artist live-work spaces.
- Cultivate engagement in other areas of community development.
- Create a strong and shared sense of community pride in the district.
- Provide opportunities for creative pursuits for people of all ages to recharge their mind, body, and spirit.

See pages 36-38 for actions that address these objectives.

GOAL 3
HONOR AND
PROMOTE LAS CRUCES
HISTORY AND CULTURE

Highlight the historic original townsite as an experiential opportunity for learning about and enjoying arts and cultural traditions, historic buildings, and cultures.

- Educate the community and visitors about the indigenous tribal history of the area.
- Preserve and promote the history of the historic townsite, including historic buildings.
- Educate the community and visitors about the history and culture of Las Cruces, making connections between the historic townsite, Mesilla, Doña Ana, and El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro.
- Increase awareness of the value of arts and cultural practices and traditions.
- Support existing and new cultural tourism businesses.

See pages 40-44 for actions that address these objectives.

GOAL 4
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
AND IMPLEMENTATION

Partners and funding come together to make the district the center of Mesilla Valley cultural development and a vibrant hub that attracts participation and implementation on many levels.

- Advance cultural growth by placing arts and cultural development on equal footing with economic and community development.
- Strategically implement the ACD Plan through the Arts and Cultural District Coordinating Council and partners.
- Promote communication and unity in the arts community through the district.
- Create and promote unified sources of information on the Arts and Cultural District and its activities.
- Support the cultural development of the Mesilla Valley by connecting the diverse pockets of arts and cultural activities in the social fabric of the district.
- Develop funding sources for arts and cultural events.
- Increase opportunities for public and private funding for cultural development.

See pages 46-51 for actions that address these objectives.

IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING

SHARED LEADERSHIP

The district is designed to be the catalyst to develop a creative ecosystem of companies, organizations, institutions, and individuals, all in the business of art and creative placemaking. Robert Lynch, President and CEO of American for the Arts said, "Collaboration is a necessity. No sector can solve the complex challenges that communities face on their own, so arts and community partnerships will be essential." Las Cruces is activating community partnerships to honor its history, improve the quality of life, and foster economic growth.

Established ACDs across the country are showing the power of collaboration by using public/private partnerships to revitalize their historic downtowns. As illustrated in the graphic below, the operation of the ACD relies on the collaboration of public and private sector entities with community support. Overseeing this collaboration, in accordance with the New Mexico Arts and Cultural District guidelines, is the Arts and Cultural District Coordinating Council (ACDCC).

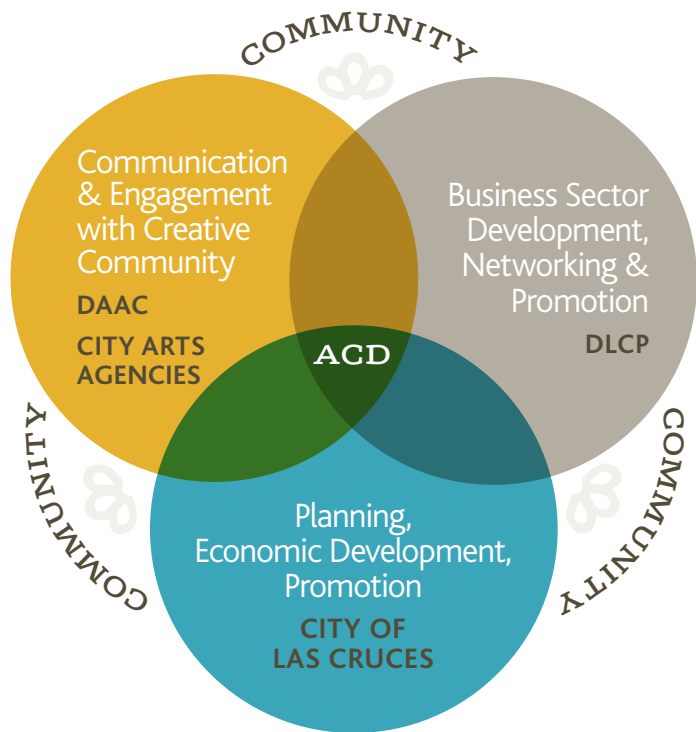
The ACDCC's membership is a broad mix of individual and organizational stakeholders, bringing together varied expertise and resources. As has been the case since the Council was formed in 2015, members will come from Downtown Las Cruces Partnership (DLCP), Doña Ana Arts Council (DAAC), City of Las Cruces, Mesquite Street

Historic District, NMSU, the business sector, and the arts and cultural sector. They will have the support of three primary partners: DAAC, the City of Las Cruces, and DLCP, all sharing leadership in pursuing the Action Plan's strategies.

As indicated by the graphic, each of the leadership partners has an area of expertise. The Doña Ana Arts Council and the City's arts agencies have experience, connections, and the ability to work with the creative community. They will be the communication and engagement link with artists, makers, creative sector entrepreneurs, arts organizations, and cultural groups. Planning, economic development, and promotion are major resources for the ACD that come from the City of Las

Cruces. Business sector development, networking, and promotion are the primary purview of DLCP.

Since 2015, the City of Las Cruces has contracted with the DLCP to focus on the development of the ACD in conjunction with running the MainStreet program. DLCP's mission is "to create and support a climate for emerging businesses and an environment that stimulates future business development." It is recommended that the City of Las Cruces contract with DLCP to run the ACD because they have a depth of experience in the downtown area and a strong relationship with the businesses. The DLCP Board has embraced the project, and the staff is outcome-



oriented and on the ground in the district. This structure complies with the New Mexico ACD guidelines that an entity other than a municipality must manage the district.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Implementation of the ACD Plan also requires the involvement of the general public on a variety of levels, from listening to concerts to organizing festivals to donating funds. Mesquite Street Historic District residents will work on beautification of historic homes, shared public art projects, investing in their own historic homes, and supporting business owners, both established and innovative "millennium" minded new businesses.

Members of the public recognize the value of collaboration and partnerships between artists, arts organizations and a variety of different groups. They want to help and will help when asked. Artists are interested in contributing to the new scene. Small creative economy business owners will share artist contact lists, promote events, and share their creativity.

MULTIPLE FUNDING SOURCES

Funding will be pulled together from many public and private sources with



PHOTO: DOWNTOWN LAS CRUCES PARTNERSHIP

the support of the City of Las Cruces. It is recommended that the City provide a dedicated funding stream for ongoing arts and cultural programs in the district. Fundraising by the DLCP, DAAC, and other private organizations addresses foundations, individual donors, and corporate sponsorship/ philanthropy. With the approval of this plan, there are governmental sources that will become available through the State of New Mexico and the City. Concurrent with the writing of the ACD Plan, the City of Las Cruces is revising its Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) ordinance to include Arts and Cultural Districts, which enables spending on a variety of purposes. Las Cruces will be well-positioned to apply for creative placemaking grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and Artplace America. See Appendix 5 for a list of funding sources.

Certain elements of this Action Plan take advantage of coordination of services that already have budgets, which will help the ACD Plan achieve greater impact. For example, Action 1.3 suggests fostering more creative entrepreneurship by asking the organizations that offer training and consulting to entrepreneurs to work together on filling the needs for the ACD. Because these services already exist, new financial resources may not be required.

Potential partners have been identified throughout the Action Plan with the belief that the work can be done strategically using the talents and resources of many different entities. This is a challenge that becomes easier as working relationships are established, developed, and nurtured. 🌸

TYPES OF FUNDING SOURCES:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| City of Las Cruces | Corporate Sponsorships and Grants |
| State of New Mexico Grants, Tax Incentives and Tax Credits | National Funding Consortium Grants |
| Federal Grants and Tax Credits | Private Investment |
| | Individual Donors |
| | Foundations |



1

GOAL ONE

FOSTER ECONOMIC GROWTH

A sustainable creative economy contributes to the total economic framework of the community and develops diverse businesses and a creative professional workforce.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Goal 1 addresses the Comprehensive Plan's Community Character and Economic Prosperity goals.

► COMMUNITY CHARACTER SUB-THEME

Enriched Heritage: Building a sense of place and identity and Enhancing the environment with inspired quality design.

► ECONOMIC PROSPERITY SUB-THEMES

Economic Diversity: Building a diversified business community.

Business and Industry Support: Retention, expansion and attraction of businesses.

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

Goal 1 assists the Downtown Master Plan's priorities to connect the primary public spaces between Water Street and Mesquite Street and for adding residents.

Benchmarks

POPULATION OF THE ACD'S REGION

220,000	2016 Doña Ana County <i>Source: US Census</i>
14,432	2017 NMSU Las Cruces Campus Enrollment <i>Source: NMSU Quick Facts 2017-2018</i>
2.7 million	New Mexico Borderplex <i>Source: new-mexico-borderplex.com</i>

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF NONPROFIT ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR AUDIENCES IN THE CITY OF LAS CRUCES

(Not included in the study: for-profit businesses and individual artists)

\$8,508,432	Expenditures by Arts and Cultural Organizations
\$10,596,813	Event-related spending by Arts and Cultural Audiences

Source: Arts & Economic Prosperity 5, Americans for the Arts

KEY TO ACRONYMS

ACD: Arts and Cultural District	DLCP: Downtown Las Cruces Partnership
ACDCC: Arts and Cultural District Coordinating Council	LCPS: Las Cruces Public Schools
CLC: City of Las Cruces	NMSU: New Mexico State University
CoC: Chamber of Commerce	VLC: Visit Las Cruces
DAAC: Doña Ana Arts Council	
DACC: Doña Ana Community College	

ACTION 1.1

MAKE THE DISTRICT A LOCAL AND REGIONAL DRAW

1.1.1 Conduct the ACD as a place where the community comes first, welcoming all members of the community, but also welcoming tourists; a place of authenticity that brings the entire Las Cruces community together by maintaining a foundation of cultural expression by Mesilla Valley artists, makers, performers, scientists, athletes, writers, designers, film and TV creators, new media creators, and other creators. Build on that foundation by complementing, inspiring and challenging Mesilla Valley creators with art and artists from other places.

SUGGESTED LEAD: ACDCC

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: DLCP / DAAC / CLC

WHEN: 2018-2023

1.1.2 Create a unique identity as a center of Border Art and Culture by reaching out to create partnerships and contracts with artists, arts organizations and other cultural entities in the Mesilla Valley, El Paso, Deming, Alamogordo, T or C, Juarez, and the Spaceport.

SUGGESTED LEAD: ACDCC

WHEN: 2018-2023

1.1.3 Design and implement a comprehensive wayfinding system leading people from highways and major roads to the district, and directing people around the district once they arrive.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Mesquite Historic Preservation Society

WHEN: 2018-2020

ACTION 1.2

CONTINUE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1.2.1 Develop a mixed-use art and entertainment block as a northern anchor area. Uses such as a boutique cinema; food, drink, and retail products made by regional arts and agricultural makers; and lifestyle/specialty food product shops could be integrated in the block along with existing uses on upper floors.

SUGGESTED LEAD: Independent Developer

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: CLC / DLCP

WHEN: 2019-2023

1.2.2 Contract with a professional designer/planner to develop plans for leading pedestrians and drivers from the Main Street area to Mesquite Street and back again. Elements could include public art, wayfinding signage, sidewalk treatments, landscaping the callecitas, the use of color as a route designation, and other innovative ideas.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC Public Works Department

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: City Art Board / DAAC / Artists and Arts organizations / DLCP

WHEN: 2018-2020

1.2.3 Examine and address pedestrian safety and walkability. Establish crosswalks where needed and maintain crosswalks to move people around the district safely and to achieve walkability from adjoining residential neighborhoods into the district.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC Public Works Department

WHEN: 2018-2019



PHOTO: BREE LAMB

1.2.4 Continue the Renovate Main Street Matching Grant Program run by the Economic Development Department with a priority for maintaining and restoring historic architecture.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC Economic Development Department

WHEN: 2018-2019

1.2.5 Develop a plan for street lighting and recognition of the historic El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (potential Art in Public Places Project) with banners or permanent metal markers on light posts, flags or other structural elements in the Mesquite neighborhood. Consider funding this through a Mesquite Neighborhood Tax Increment Development District as suggested in the Downtown Master Plan.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Las Esperanzas, Inc. / Mesquite Historic Preservation Society

WHEN: 2018-2019

1.2.6 Place art in outdoor public settings and integrate art in City infrastructure projects with consideration as to how art and artist-

designed elements can help identify the district, make it feel cohesive, and define spaces. Contract with artists who have experience with designing work to enhance a public space.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC Public Works Department / CLC Quality of Life Department

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: CLC Parks and Recreation Department / City Art Board

WHEN: 2018-2023

1.2.7 Use ideas from the public for public/visual art in the ACD: exhibit public art that tells stories, exhibit modern art, showcase local and New Mexico artists, place sculpture in side streets and callecitas, hold a year-long public art exhibit, show a variety of work in diverse types of spaces, commission functional art installations such as fountains and play structures, and commission murals on walls, electric boxes, and other structures.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC Quality of Life Department / CLC Museum System

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: City Art Board / Community Organizations / Youth Programs / VLC / Businesses / NMSU / DAAC

WHEN: Plan 2018-2019 / Procure Funds and Implement 2019-2023



PHOTOS: EMMITT BOOHER

1.2.8 Complete the mini-mural project of dumpsters and electrical boxes depicting the historic buildings of Main Street and the Mesquite neighborhood prior to urban renewal. Create a printed map of the mini-murals for a walking tour to be available at VLC, City Hall, and the museums.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC Quality of Life Department

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: City Art Board / Doña Ana Historical Society / Las Esperanzas, Inc. / Mesquite Historic Preservation Society / NMSU Public History and Art Departments / DLCP / DAAC / CLC Museum System / CLC Solid Waste / Public Works Department

WHEN: 2018-2020

1.2.9 Examine opportunities presented by assembly-type buildings that lend a larger building template to a wide variety of adaptive reuses conducive to the goals and actions for the ACD.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC Economic Development Department / DLCP

WHEN: 2018-2023

ACTION 1.3

PROMOTE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & INCENTIVES

1.3.1 Improve and enhance current business development processes and the City's toolbox of strategies and incentives for helping startups and existing businesses. Promote the toolbox for support of the creative economy and use by creative sector businesses. Address any city permitting process improvements that may be needed.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Creative sector businesses

WHEN: 2018-2019

1.3.2 Create new collaborations between the area chambers of commerce to conceptualize and plan events in the district, such as an annual "Business Hop," that have creative elements provided by the arts and culture sector in order to highlight / showcase businesses in the district.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CoC (Greater, Green, Hispanic) / DLCP

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Businesses

WHEN: 2018-2019

1.3.3 Activate and promote a circle of business assistance organizations, banks and private investors, and establish robust educational programs and small business financing sources to help develop creative sector businesses that serve locals and tourists in the district. Promote businesses aligned with the experience-based tourism trend. Solicit and cultivate creative entrepreneurs from Las Cruces, El Paso, and Juarez, with a focus on graduates of Las Cruces high schools and higher education institutions.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC Economic Development, Arrowhead, DLCP

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: DAAC / Branigan Library / WESST / SCORE / Small Business Development Center / VLC

WHEN: 2018-2023

ACTION 1.4

DEVELOP ARTIST SPACES TO ENRICH THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

1.4.1 Approach Meow Wolf about building a Las Cruces immersive art experience in the district that embodies

Border Art and Culture and includes a music venue.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC Economic Development Department and Museum System

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: DAAC / Las Cruces artist collectives / DLCP / Developers / NMSU Department of Art

WHEN: 2018-2019

1.4.2 Work with developers, property owners, and creative sector businesses to leverage the benefits of co-location and collaboration by creating multiple small, affordable artist and maker studio/sales/classroom/hangout spaces within one building. Make the products and activity in the building visible from the street.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC Economic Development Department

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: DLCP / DAAC / NMSU Department of Art

WHEN: 2018-2019

1.4.3 Create a physical space where NMSU and the community comes together in the ACD, and students are drawn to participate. Show exhibits of student and faculty artwork, offer presentations of scholarly work by students formulated for the general public, and find other ways to promote interactions between the academic work of NMSU and the community. Fund this through NMSU resources, grants and sales of NMSU merchandise at the ACD location.

SUGGESTED LEAD: NMSU College of Arts and Sciences

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: DLCP

WHEN: 2020-2021

1.4.4 Redevelop sites within the North Main Street Activity Center (see map on page 18) as Border Art and Culture makers areas with a diverse selection of art, food, and retail such as a local brewery, bakery/cafe/coffee shop, independent lifestyle goods retailer, specialty foods shop, artist-made products shop, or distillery. Promote the areas as places for people of the region to make and sell their products, and places for community and visitors to hang out. Promote the East Hadley callecita and avenue as a pedestrian between Main Street and the Mesquite Street Historic District.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC Economic Development Department

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: DLCP / VLC

WHEN: 2018-2023

ACTION 1.5

DEVELOP A THRIVING CREATIVE ECONOMY WITH ART, FOOD, AND RETAIL

1.5.1 Work with new and existing business owners to develop diverse food, drink, and entertainment offerings, including these business ideas offered by the public: local vs. chain restaurants, coffee shops, coffee shops with music, ice cream and gelato shops or kiosks, old-style soda shop, a wine bar, outdoor eating and drinking spaces, ethnic food, microbreweries, and a small auditorium movie-house with food and drink.

SUGGESTED LEAD: DLCP

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: MEVDA, Arrowhead / CoC (Greater, Green, Hispanic)

WHEN: 2018-2023

1.5.2 Encourage the development of more places to display and/or sell art, including traditional galleries, co-op galleries, mobile and pop-up galleries and shops, artist collective spaces, partnerships with other businesses such as restaurants and brewpubs, and other innovative ideas. Periodically use the Rio Grande Theatre gallery to show the work of emerging artists and offer the marketing professionals at VLC to help them promote and sell their work.

SUGGESTED LEAD: DLCP

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: DAAC / Museum of Art / Businesses and organizations that work with emerging artists / VLC

WHEN: 2018-2023

1.5.3 Work with Main Street property owners and lessees that have street level windows for displays or "visual spaces" to enhance the streetscape. Activate the storefronts with art displays, very small retail shops, pop-up stores, and other innovative ideas.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC Community Development / CLC Economic Development / DLCP

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Main Street property owners and businesses / DAAC / City Art Board

WHEN: 2019-2023

1.5.4 Extend and promote the hours Main Street businesses and organizations are open. Try pilot programs such as evening hours one day a week with cross promotion. Provide City funding for the museums to be open on Sundays and one weekday evening with programming to attract the community, such as indoor/outdoor events, music, social hours, docent tours, lectures, and children's programs.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC / DLCP / CoC (Greater, Green, Hispanic)

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Main Street property owners and businesses

WHEN: 2019-2023



2

GOAL TWO

IMPROVE *the*
COMMUNITY'S
QUALITY *of* LIFE

Increased arts and culture activities in an artful physical environment cultivate community and creative opportunities for all ages.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Goal 2 addresses the Comprehensive Plan's Healthy Community and Community Character goals.

► HEALTHY COMMUNITY SUB-THEMES

Great Parks and Recreation: Promoting recreation and improved quality of life.

Wide-ranging Community Facilities & Services: Providing community, social and cultural services.

Balanced Development: Calling for mixed-use development and housing for all socio-economic levels.

► COMMUNITY CHARACTER SUB-THEME

Enriched Heritage: Promote cultural events and activities.

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

Goal 2 builds on the Downtown Master Plan's changes to make neighborhood connections, dovetails with increasing the number of residents downtown, and supports creating a strong retail environment.

Benchmarks

2017 ACD WEEKDAY POPULATION

675	Resident population in the ACD
3,162	Daytime population in the ACD
2,799	Workers
363	Residents

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2017 and 2022 Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography.

2015–16 LAS CRUCES TOURISM

755,000	Visitors
\$68 million	Spending
\$2,079,195	Lodgers Tax Revenue

Source: Visit Las Cruces 2015-16 Annual Report

CAPACITY AT DOWNTOWN VENUES

203	Las Cruces Community Theatre
135	Black Box
422	Rio Grande Theatre
1,461	Plaza / Theatre style seating
175	Plaza / 10x10 booths
300	Main Street / 10x10 booths
5,800	Klein Park
4,800	Albert Johnson Park

ACTION 2.1

STRATEGICALLY USE THE ACD MUSEUMS AND THEATRES AS ANCHORS

2.1.1 Create themed, marketable cultural events that are open/available for three months or more. Use the city museum system's special exhibits as the theme and foundation for collaboration among artists, organizations and businesses to build a marketable package of meaningful, authentic, and noteworthy cultural events, classes, and experiences that occur within the museum buildings and at other sites in the district (see page 56 for further information).

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC Museum System / VLC

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: DAAC / Performing and Visual Arts Organizations / Artists of all media / NMSU

WHEN: Bi-annually, 2019-2023

2.1.2 Start conversations between the three Main Street theatres about collaborative programming and promotion. Initiate coordinated programming and cross promotions with restaurants in the ACD. Brainstorm ways to increase attendance at the theatres.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC Economic Development Department / Rio Grande Theatre

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Black Box / Las Cruces Community Theatre

WHEN: 2018

2.1.3 Build new gallery space for an exciting interactive and changing exhibit of the Museum of Art's permanent collection. Design the exhibit for students to visit and learn about Las Cruces arts and culture and its place in the larger context of New Mexico and the region.

Develop exhibit features, curriculum, and/or programming that connect historic buildings and public art in the ACD.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: NMSU College of Arts and Sciences Students / Center for Cultural Technology / New Mexico Highlands University Department of Media Arts & Technology

WHEN: Plan 2018-19 / Procure Funds and Implement 2019-2021

ACTION 2.2

ATTRACT CREATIVE PEOPLE TO LIVE IN THE DISTRICT

2.2.1 Enter into an agreement with Artspace to pursue an affordable live/work rentals project in the district, make the common spaces and the leased spaces in the building(s) a center of creative activity, and deploy the residents to create activity throughout the district.

SUGGESTED LEAD: Artspace Project Steering Committee

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: CLC / El Paso Community Foundation / Southern New Mexico Community Foundation

WHEN: 2018-2023

2.2.2 Develop a plan for creating artist housing, live/work and sales space in the Mesquite Street Historic District with measures to maintain affordability. Using the Metropolitan Development Act, create a Mesquite District Tax Increment Development District as suggested in the Downtown Master Plan.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC Economic Development Department / CLC Community Development Department

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Las Esperanzas, Inc. / DLCP / Mesquite Historic Preservation Society

WHEN: 2019-2020

ACTION 2.3

PLAN FUN EVENTS TO ATTRACT LOCALS AND VISITORS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

2.3.1 Establish and promote an events schedule that addresses a variety of times, days, seasons, and audiences: children and families, teens, college students, young adults, adults, and seniors.

SUGGESTED LEAD: ACDCC

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Organizations represented on the Coordinating Council / DLCP / DAAC / Event organizers / CLC / VLC

WHEN: 2018-2019

2.3.2 Create a year-round schedule of monthly major downtown festivals, such as Monuments to Main Street. Expand events that have occurred on the Plaza and design new outdoor arts and music festivals that use stages spread throughout the district. Consider a variety of music styles and themes.

SUGGESTED LEAD: ACDCC / VLC / DLCP

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Existing festivals / Plaza event organizers / DAAC / Artists and Arts Organizations

WHEN: 2018, Ongoing

2.3.3 Collaborate with the NMSU College of Arts and Sciences by pitching their student groups to create events downtown.

SUGGESTED LEAD: ACDCC / DLCP

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: NMSU College of Arts and Sciences

WHEN: 2019

2.3.4 Promote the Plaza, Albert J. Johnson Park, and Klein Park as performance spaces for diverse music styles such as symphony, Tex/Mex, jazz/blues, Western, etc., and readings, poetry, and plays.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC / DLCP

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: ACDCC / Mesquite Neighborhood Organizations

WHEN: 2018-2019

2.3.5 Plan regular artist studio tours.

SUGGESTED LEAD: ACD Artists and Creative Sector Businesses

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: DAAC / DLCP / Proposed Artspace Live/Work Housing Organizers and Residents

WHEN: 2022-2023

ACTION 2.4

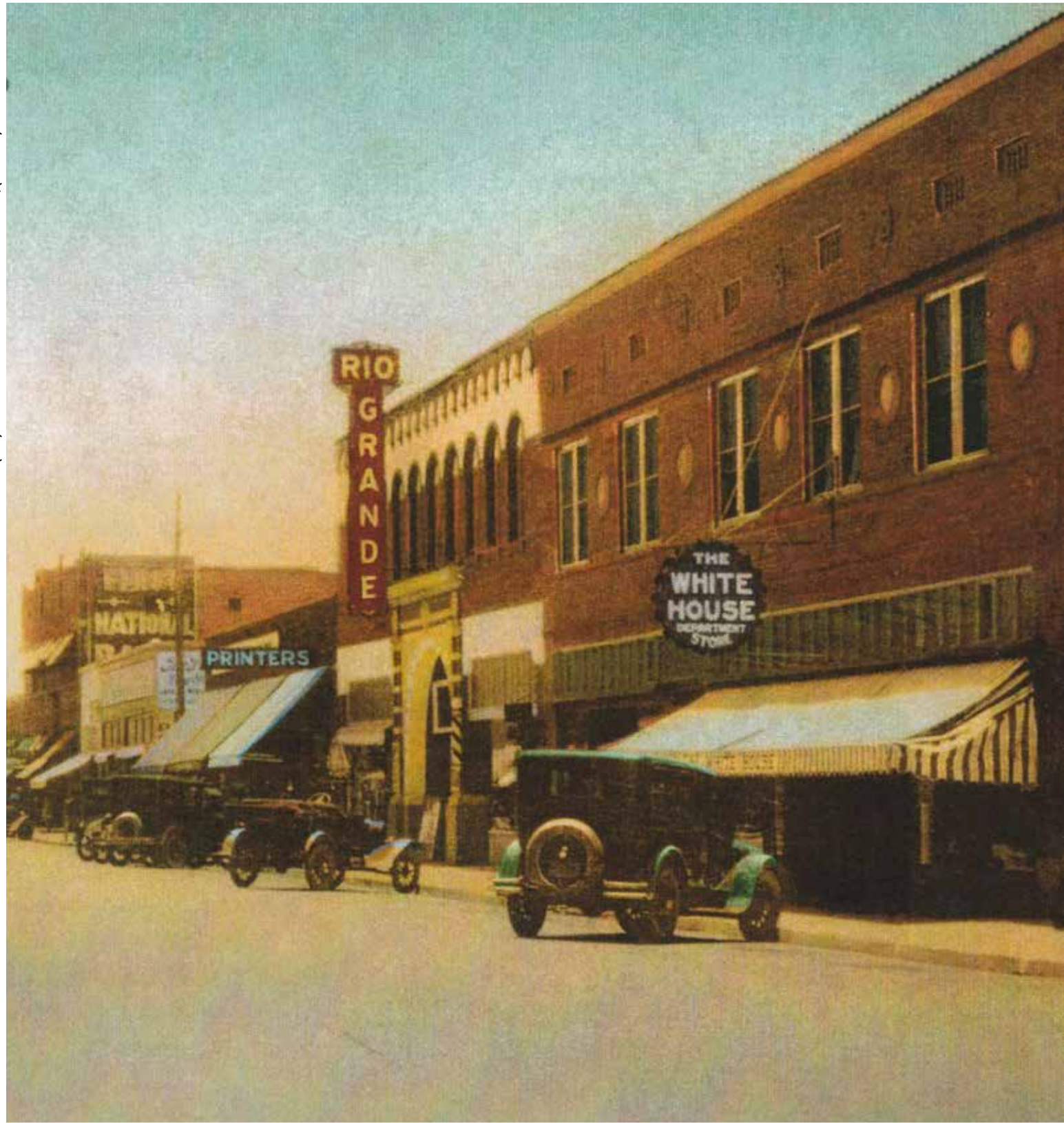
CREATE A CHANGING AND SURPRISING ARTFUL STREET ENVIRONMENT

2.4.1 Create an ACD Artist in Residence Program. Contract artists, artisans, and makers to be the ACD Artist in Residence for 6-12 month periods. Select them based on their plans for enlivening the streets, windows, and buildings with performances and displays of their own making and by other artists: busking, pop-up art spaces, temporary art displays, poetry readings, culinary events, etc.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC Quality of Life Department / DLCP

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: City Art Board / DAAC / NMSU / DACC / Visual arts, performing, literary, and culinary groups

WHEN: 2019-ongoing



3

GOAL THREE

HONOR *and* PROMOTE
LAS CRUCES HISTORY
and CULTURE

*Highlight the historic original townsite as
an experiential opportunity for learning about
and enjoying arts and cultural traditions,
historic buildings, and cultures.*



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Goal 3 supports the Community Character and Sustainable Growth goals.

- **COMMUNITY CHARACTER SUB-THEME**
Enriched Heritage: Foster appreciation for cultural heritage preservation.
- **SUSTAINABLE GROWTH SUB-THEME**
Vibrant Planning Areas, Neighborhoods and Districts: Support the distinct character of all neighborhoods and districts.

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

Goal 3 complements the Downtown Master Plan’s goals for looking at downtown and the adjoining neighborhoods as a “holistic composition” and historic architecture as a component of Community Character.

Benchmarks

MAIN STREET MUSEUM ATTENDANCE
2016–17

	Attendance		Tours
	Child	Adult	
Branigan Cultural Center	18,631	1,755	602
Museum of Art	18,214	1,876	545
Museum of Science and Nature	35,955	3,691	946
Total	72,790	7,322	2,093

Source: Museum System

STUDENTS THAT VISIT
AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACD

2017-18 Enrollment at Las Cruces K - 12 Public and Charter Schools

- 24,728** Las Cruces Public School District
K–12th grade students
- 200** Alma d’arte Charter School
9th–12th grade students
- 120** La Academia Dolores Huerta
6th–8th grade students
- 200** J.P. Taylor Academy
K–8th grade students
- 285** New America School
9th–12th grade students

ACTION 3.1

CELEBRATE HISTORY
AND CULTURE

3.1.1 Use the Branigan Cultural Center as a venue where the community comes together to share stories, hear lectures, and jointly present exhibits that illuminate the community’s history and cultural diversity, continuing from the “What’s Your Las Cruces” interactive community engagement exhibit in 2018.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC Museum System
POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Neighborhood Associations / Community Members / NMSU History Department
WHEN: 2018-2019

3.1.2 Create a historic marker program to identify architectural styles and promote historic properties and the history of the original townsite.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC Community Development Department
POTENTIAL PARTNERS: New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office / Building owners / American Institute of Architects Las Cruces / DLCP / Las Esperanzas, Inc. / NMSU History Department / Doña Ana Historical Society / Mesilla Valley Preservation, Inc. / Mesquite Historic Preservation Society
WHEN: 2020-2021

3.1.3 Establish a living history museum in a historic Mesquite compound. Through exhibits show the way of life before Spanish settlement and in the historic townsite in the 19th century, telling stories about the indigenous people and the 19th century settlers, and featuring cultural practices with participation by visitors.



PHOTO: LAS CRUCES MUSEUM SYSTEM COLLECTIONS

SUGGESTED LEAD: A task force of potential partners led by ACDCC
POTENTIAL PARTNERS: CLC Museum System / Mesquite Neighborhood Organizations / Historic Preservation Organizations / NMSU Arts and Sciences Departments
WHEN: Feasibility Study 2020-2021 / Implementation 2022-2023

3.1.4 Plan and fundraise for a special event in the ACD celebrating the 175th anniversary of Las Cruces in 2024.

SUGGESTED LEAD: 175th Anniversary Steering Committee appointed by City Council
POTENTIAL PARTNERS: ACDCC / DLCP / DAAC / CLC / Mesquite Neighborhood Organizations / Artists and Arts and Cultural Organizations / NMSU / DACC
WHEN: 2021

ACTION 3.2

INVOLVE YOUTH AND
YOUNG ARTISTS

3.2.1 Encourage Plaza event planners to create opportunities for college students and youth participation by suggesting activities and resources.

SUGGESTED LEADS: CLC Economic Development Department, Parks and Recreation Department, Volunteer Coordinator
POTENTIAL PARTNERS: LCPS Arts/Music Departments / Charter and Private Schools / NMSU / DACC
WHEN: 2018-19

3.2.2 Offer field trips and other opportunities for students to visit the ACD.

SUGGESTED LEADS: DAAC / CLC Museum System / LCPS–Field trips / Charter and Private Schools / NMSU / DACC
WHEN: 2018-19, Ongoing

3.2.3 Use the Rio Grande Theatre gallery to show the work of student artists and the stage for student performances.

SUGGESTED LEAD: VLC
POTENTIAL PARTNERS: DAAC / LCPS Art, Theatre, and Music Teachers / Charter and Private Schools Art, Theatre, and Music Teachers, NMSU, DACC
WHEN: 2018-19, Ongoing



PHOTOS: EMMITT BOOHER

3.2.4 Develop youth nights in the ACD for teenagers and young adults.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC: Youth Services

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: LCPS District / Non-profit Youth Service Organizations / Civic Organizations / NMSU / DACC

WHEN: 2020-2021

ACTION 3.3 FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION FOR ALL AGES

3.3.1 Continue visual arts classes in the ACD for adults and youth, in short and long formats for locals and visitors.

SUGGESTED LEADS: CLC Museum of Art / ACD Galleries / Existing and New Non-profit and For-profit Businesses

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: VLC / Teaching Artists / DAAC

WHEN: 2018-19, Ongoing

3.3.2 Continue performing arts classes and performance opportunities for youth.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC Parks and Recreation Department

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: CLC Quality of Life Department, Community theatres, dance, and music groups

WHEN: 2018-19, Ongoing

3.3.3 Utilize downtown venues for existing lecture series, TedTalks, NMSU lectures, and other presentations.

SUGGESTED LEADS: Coordinator/Council and Constituent Services / VLC / Theatres / CLC Museum System

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: NMSU / DACC / Academy for Learning in Retirement

WHEN: 2018-19

3.3.4 Work with public school districts, NMSU, DACC, and non-profit youth organizations to hold classes, after school programs, and other educational programs. Make the programs inclusive of at-risk youth. Create artist in residence programs.

SUGGESTED LEAD: CLC Parks and Recreation Department

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: City Citation Program / City Weed and Seed Program / LAB, non-profit organization

WHEN: 2020-2021

ACTION 3.4 TOURS AND EVENTS SHOWCASING ART, HISTORY, CULTURE, AND ARCHITECTURE

3.4.1 Create self-guided history, art, and architecture walking and biking tours that feature public art, Las Cruces history, El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, customs, arts and cultural

traditions, and family stories. Work with VLC to put them on their APP.

SUGGESTED LEADS: Las Esperanzas, Inc. / Mesquite Historic Preservation Society / American Institute of Architects Las Cruces

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: NMSU History Department / VLC

WHEN: 2018-19

3.4.2 Encourage the development of tour businesses with a consistent schedule of walking, biking, and/or bus tours that include the indigenous people, stories of families that lived in the district, architecture, and ghosts.

SUGGESTED LEADS: DLCP / Mesquite Neighborhood Organizations

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Entrepreneurs / WESST / VLC

WHEN: 2020-2021

3.4.3 Start an artist-led walking program for all ages with creative ideas such as those shared by the Museum of Walking in Tempe, Arizona.

SUGGESTED LEADS: CLC Museum System / DAAC

WHEN: 2020-2021

3.4.4 Evaluate and build on the success of the Art Ramble to develop a new free monthly event that celebrates the new ACD and incorporates a variety of art forms attractive to diverse audiences.

SUGGESTED LEAD: DLCP with a Task Force

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: DAAC / ACD Businesses / ACD Arts Non-profits / Museum System / CoC (Green, Greater, Hispanic)

WHEN: 2018-2019

3.4.5 Revive and create new community events in the Mesquite District. For example, relook at the scope of Winterfest, the holiday festival based on Christmas traditions of luminarias, music, and wagon rides running between the Alameda Depot and Mesquite neighborhoods.

SUGGESTED LEADS: DLCP / Las Esperanzas, Inc.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Mesquite District Businesses / Mesquite District Residents / Alameda Depot Neighborhood / CLC Museum System / CLC Parks and Recreation / VLC

WHEN: 2018-2019

PHOTOS: EMMITT BOOHER





4

GOAL FOUR

COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT *and*
IMPLEMENTATION

Partners and funding come together to make the district the center of the Mesilla Valley's cultural development and a vibrant hub that attracts participation and implementation on many levels.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Goal 4 supports the Community Character and Economic Prosperity goals.

► COMMUNITY CHARACTER SUB-THEME

Enriched Heritage: Seek support for educational programs in museums, libraries and cultural centers.

► ECONOMIC PROSPERITY SUB-THEME

Business and Industry Support:
Promote tourist-related activities.

ACTION 4.1

IMPLEMENT THE PLAN THROUGH COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

4.1.1 Position the ACD Coordinating Council as a standing committee under the umbrella of the Downtown Las Cruces Partnership. Discuss and determine operating policies and bylaws that meet or exceed the New Mexico ACD requirements (see Appendix 6).

SUGGESTED LEADS: ACDCC / DLCP
WHEN: 2018

4.1.2 Implement the plan through a contract between the CLC and DLCP to house the ACD Coordinating Council. Coordinate with other governmental arts and economic development agencies, and the DAAC.

SUGGESTED LEADS: DLCP / CLC
POTENTIAL PARTNERS: DAAC / CLC Arts and Economic Development Agencies / Organizations and businesses as needed
WHEN: 2018 - 2023



PHOTO: DOWNTOWN LAS CRUCES PARTNERSHIP



PHOTO: DOWNTOWN LAS CRUCES PARTNERSHIP

4.1.3 Maintain an active role in City discussions/planning processes, sending representatives to meetings about City comprehensive planning (Plan4LasCruces, updated every two years), strategic planning, downtown planning, and other public planning meetings.

LEADS: DLCP / ACDCC / DAAC
WHEN: 2018, Ongoing

4.1.4 Create a brain trust of creative people to develop wild ideas and instigate collaborative program planning. Charge them with keeping ACD events fun and cutting-edge, following international trends.

LEAD: ACDCC
WHEN: 2018 - 2023

4.1.5 Participate in New Mexico Arts and Cultural District program statewide meetings, joint promotion opportunities, and funding opportunities.

LEAD: DLCP
WHEN: 2018-2023

ACTION 4.2

BRANDING, ADVERTISING & COMMUNICATION

4.2.1 Use “the creative heart of our city” as the brand for the ACD, and contract with an advertising/PR agency to create plans to promote it as an attraction and an arts and entertainment destination of Border Art and Culture.

SUGGESTED LEADS: ACDCC / DLCP
POTENTIAL PARTNERS:
ACD Organizations / VLC
WHEN: 2018-2023

4.2.2 Appoint a task force to strategically coordinate and elevate regional advertising, marketing, and PR activities of the district and the major organizations in the district on a quarterly basis. Consider a variety of joint promotions like Monuments to Main Street Month, For the Love of Arts Month, and Las Cruces Space Festival. Engage the community at large to make personal connections through social media and use traditional sources of advertising and PR to promote the district regionally: radio, broadcast TV, cable TV, newspapers, magazines, billboards.

SUGGESTED LEAD: DLCP
POTENTIAL PARTNERS: ACD Organizations / VLC
WHEN: 2018-2023



PHOTOS: (TOP) EMMITT BOOHER, (BOTTOM) SABRINA PRATT

4.2.5 Promote the ACD strategically and widely.

- Create an ACD website and social media channels for two audiences:
 - locals and tourists who plan to visit the ACD
 - arts, cultural, education and other organizations, and individuals who want to participate in organizing and presenting activities
- Place a highly visible link to the ACD website on lascrucescvb.org and promote the ACD as an attraction.
- Push event notices through the email lists and newsletters of all the ACD organizations.

LEAD: ACDCC

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: DLCP / VLC / ACD presenters, producers and businesses / DAAC / CoC (Greater, Green, Hispanic)

WHEN: 2018-2023

ACTION 4.3 ADVANCE AND DEEPEN CULTURAL EXPRESSION

4.3.1 Develop projects that inspire exciting new art, services and products by local and regional artists, designers, makers, and arts organizations.

LEAD: ACDCC

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: DAAC / NMSU / DACC

WHEN: 2019-2023

4.2.3 Make a central, unified, electronic calendar for the ACD and promote it to the entire community as THE place to list events and find events.

SUGGESTED LEAD: VLC

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: ACDCC / DAAC / ACD presenters, producers and businesses

WHEN: 2018-2023

4.2.4 Focus and support Mesilla Valley arts and culture by becoming the primary communication link with and between all artists, makers, creative professionals, arts organizations, and cultural organizations.

SUGGESTED LEAD: DAAC

WHEN: 2018 - 2023

4.3.2 Use the ACD as a platform for connecting the Mesilla Valley arts and cultural scene by encouraging collaborative projects and making it the central location for presenting Las Cruces arts and culture. Make it a place that is inviting and rewarding to participate in for all members of the arts and cultural sector. Pave the way for increased collaboration by creating a new annual event that is presented by the ACD.

LEAD: ACDCC

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: DLCP / DAAC / CLC Museum System / City Art Board

WHEN: 2018-2023

ACTION 4.4

DEVELOP AND LEVERAGE MULTIPLE FUNDING SOURCES

4.4.1 Leverage the new collaboration spurred by the ACD to obtain funding from CLC, regional and statewide community foundations, Federal sources for creative placemaking, private foundations, Doña Ana County, and the State of New Mexico including N.M. MainStreet (see Appendix 5).

LEAD: ACDCC

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: CLC / DLCP / DAAC

WHEN: 2018-2023

4.4.2 Allocate a dedicated CLC funding stream for ongoing arts and cultural programming and management of the ACD.

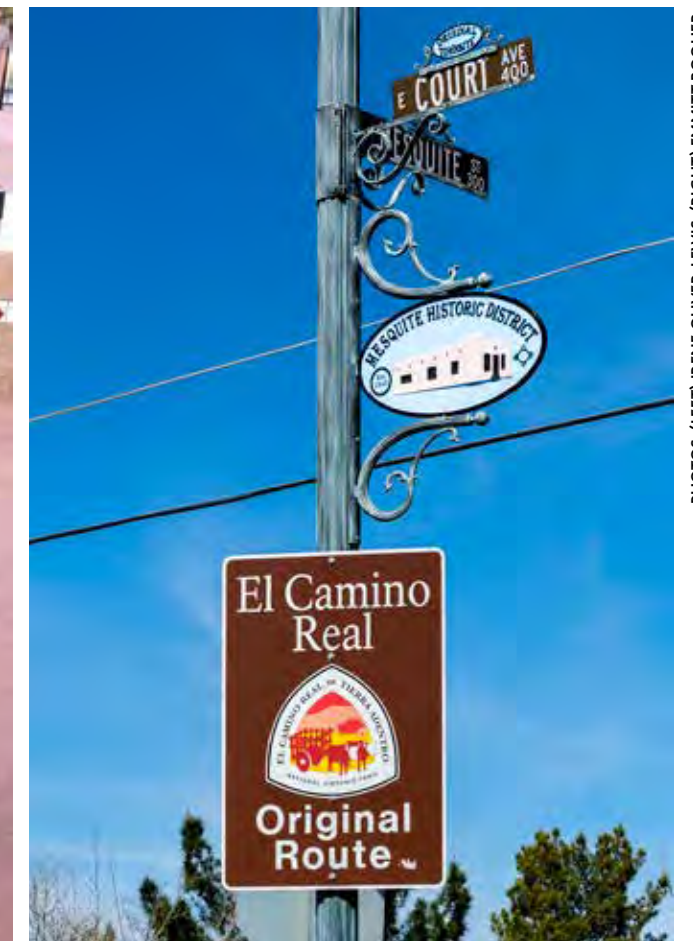
LEAD: CLC

WHEN: 2018-2019

4.4.3 Create a CLC loan/grant fund to support renovations by businesses/property owners in the ACD to bring buildings up to code, thereby supporting the longevity of existing businesses.

LEAD: CLC Economic Development Department

WHEN: 2018-2019



PHOTOS: (LEFT) IRENE OLIVER-LEWIS, (RIGHT) EMMITT BOOHER



PHOTO: ARMANDO MORALES

KEY TO ACRONYMS

ACD: Arts and Cultural District

ACDCC: Arts and Cultural District Coordinating Council

CLC: City of Las Cruces

CoC: Chamber of Commerce

DAAC: Doña Ana Arts Council

DACC: Doña Ana Community College

DLCP: Downtown Las Cruces Partnership

LCPS: Las Cruces Public Schools

NMSU: New Mexico State University

VLC: Visit Las Cruces

ACTION 4.5

MEASURE PROGRESS

4.5.1 Develop performance measures, measure progress annually, and provide a progress report to the State Coordinator of Arts and Cultural Districts and the New Mexico Arts Commission at the end of each calendar year. Report to the ACD partners regularly.

LEAD: ACDCC

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:
CLC / DAAC / DLCP

WHEN: Annually

4.5.2 Use these benchmarks to evaluate progress on increasing foot traffic, awareness, events, and economic development:

- Number of people downtown — Soofa data

- Media impressions — tracked by VLC
- Social media reach, impressions and engagement — tracked by DLCP and VLC
- Number of events on the Plaza — tracked by CLC permits issued
- Number of district-wide events — tracked by CLC permits, Museums, and galleries.
- Number of new arts/culture-related businesses gained and lost — tracked by observation and reporting of DLCP (see Appendix 3).

While evaluating progress in the ACD, consider whether there are signs of gentrification that should be addressed and develop solutions.

LEAD: ACDCC

WHEN: Annually

CHAPTER 3

EXPLORING CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

This chapter explores some creative placemaking that is already happening and expands on strategies in the Action Plan.

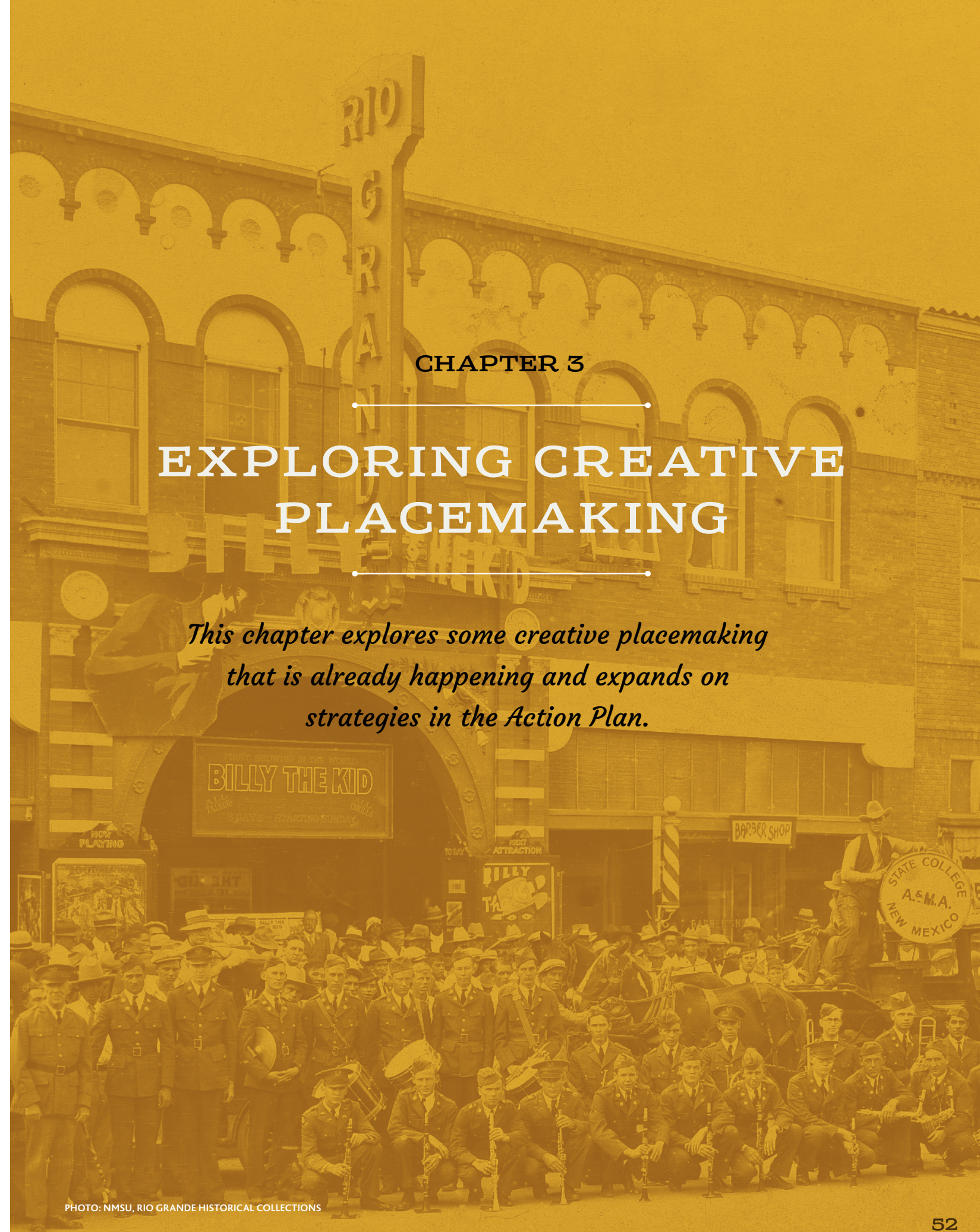
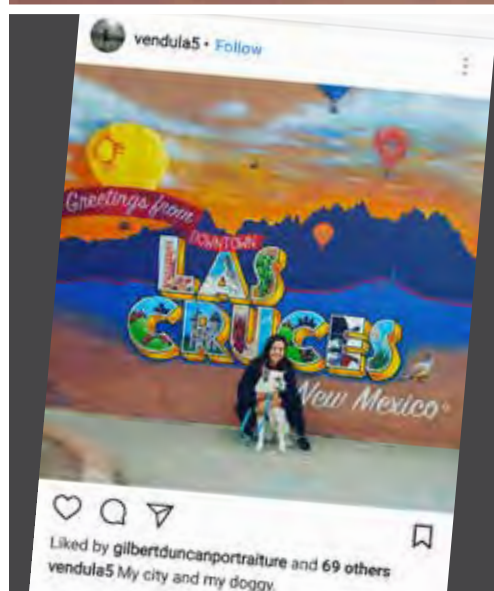
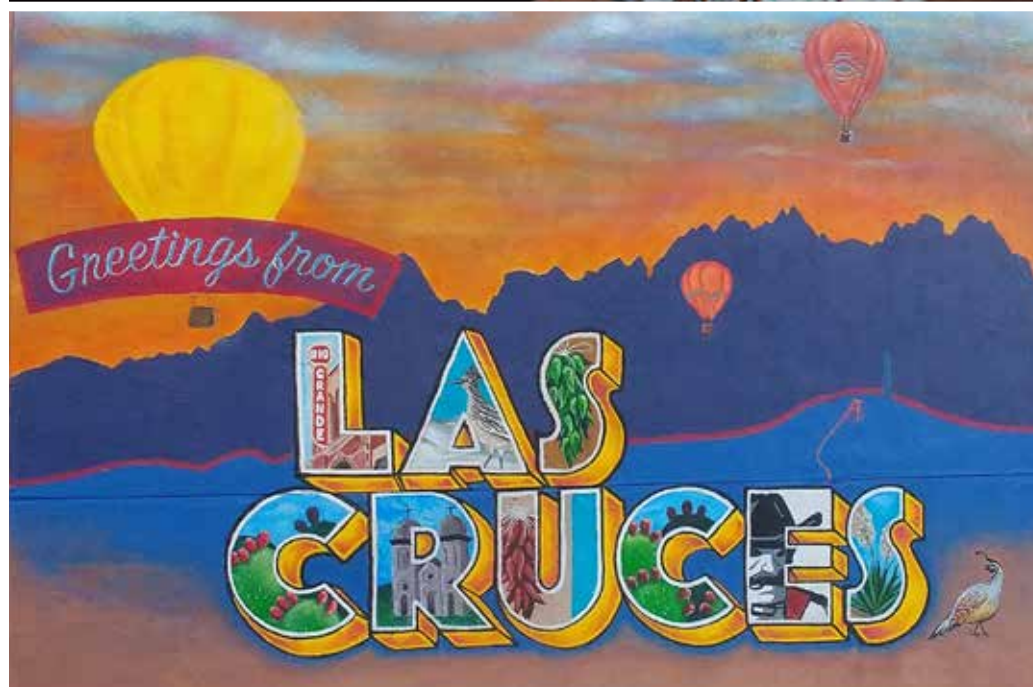


PHOTO: NMSU, RIO GRANDE HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS



COLOR ME CRUCES MURAL COLLABORATION AND AN ARTFUL ENVIRONMENT

Color Me Cruces, a postcard-themed mural, is an example of creative placemaking, a national best practice for making communities more livable and economically viable.

Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa explain in a white paper commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts that the concept of creative placemaking “partners public, private, non-profit, and community sectors to shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region around arts and culture activities.”

The mural project, located on the Insta-Copy building on Main Street in Las Cruces, was dedicated in January 2018. This story illustrates some of the primary strategies recommended in the ACD Plan. The mural was a partnership of the arts and culture sector, the business sector, and government. Millennial generation artists and youth artists were the designers and painters. They did their work with the support of the business community and the city. The general public enjoyed watching the work and joined in the dedication ceremony and celebration. Interest in the mural and downtown is growing through messages and pictures on social media.

The partners in the mural creation are artists Anahy Nunez, Aaron Valenzuela (co-owners of Atom Bomb in the ACD), Christina Ballew (co-owner of NMCO media) and youth artists in the City’s Juvenile Citation Program; Jennifer Garcia Kozlowski, Executive Director of Downtown Las Cruces Partnership; the Doña Ana Arts Council; Diana Lyon, co-owner of Insta-Copy Imaging; and Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department. The mural was funded by the New Mexico Resiliency Alliance. The city’s three chambers of commerce—Las Cruces, Green, and Hispanic, organized a ribbon cutting ceremony which drew hundreds of people.

“As a small business owner, I feel it’s great to bring the community to Main Street to see the work of local artists and to visit other businesses on Main Street,” said Lyons, who has owned Insta-Copy for 37 years in the ACD.

“Everybody was excited by the process. We worked in the early evening hours and I was surprised at how many people were downtown at that hour. Kids on skateboards, people driving by, or people

walking to the yoga center, would comment on how much they loved having the mural on Main Street and wanted more public art,” noted artist Nunez. She also noted how news of the mural spread, “People are sending me photos via Facebook of them in front of the mural. They are creating a postcard within a postcard.”

The 16’x20’ mural features the words “Greetings from Downtown Las Cruces” with each letter of Las Cruces showing iconic City visuals like NMSU’s mascot Pistol Pete, St. Genevieve’s Catholic Church, and the Rio Grande Theatre.

Another public art project that complements the mural is the painting of City dumpsters and electrical boxes throughout the district. The images painted are of historic buildings that are not in existence today. Three dumpsters exist currently—the Amador Hotel, the Don Bernardo Hotel, and street scenes of Main Street. They were painted by graffiti mural artists. This interesting work will be a part of walking tours that highlight the historical buildings. (Action 3.4, page 43). 🌸



CULTURAL ANCHORS IN THE DISTRICT BUILDING BLOCKS FOR SUCCESS

Cultural anchors and venues in the Arts and Cultural District are the City museums, the three theatres, Plaza de Las Cruces, Klein Park, and Johnson Park. These create a platform for innovative activities, collaborative advertising, festivals, and drawing visitors from one area of the ACD to another. The anchors serve as foundations for creative placemaking.

"Centers of activity" serve as the foundation for future public, private, and institutional growth, research, and development. The anchors within those centers are a starting point for collaboration, partnerships, event/activity creation, and creative placemaking. They are magnets for creative economy development in art businesses, products, and services.

The four current centers of activity are:

- **North Main Street** to include Johnson Park, the Branigan Memorial Library, the Museums
- **Central Main Street** to include the Plaza de Las Cruces and the Rio Grande Theatre
- **South Main Street** to include the new Amador multi-use entertainment complex and the Historic Amador Hotel

- **Mesquite Street Historic District** to include Klein Park, El Camino Real, and Mesquite Street businesses and historic adobe homes.

Highlighted are two aspects of the anchors that serve as examples of building blocks for creative placemaking.

PLAZA DE LAS CRUCES

Opened in September 2016, this area was the site of the historic plaza of St. Genevieve's Catholic Church that was the central gathering place in the City until the mid-1960's. Today the Plaza continues its cultural legacy with a stage that can serve both theatre and concert seating up to 1,500 people.

Examining the number of downtown events at the Plaza since it was built is encouraging for the future of this ACD anchor. Prior to the Plaza de Las Cruces, events on Main Street used the spaces

from Las Cruces to Griggs Avenues, La Placita next to the Camunez Building, and the Rio Grande Theatre.

The following are the number of events on Main Street from Las Cruces to Griggs Avenues.

2016

- 41 Events on Main Street/ La Callecita (20 were on the Plaza de Las Cruces after it opened September 17, 2016)

2017

- 76 Events on the Plaza de Las Cruces

2018

- 45 Events booked on the Plaza de Las Cruces as of February 2018

On-going events are the Farmers and Crafts Market on Wednesdays and Saturdays year-round and the first Friday Art Ramble. These events are not included in the above counts.



PHOTO: EMMITT BOOHER

Events on the Plaza nearly doubled in numbers after the opening September 2016 and some 45 are already booked through May 2018. In addition, the type of events has increased to include more concerts and performances. Some examples are NMSU Music in the Schools; Mayor's Jazz Fest; Las Cruces Heritage Festival; City Blue's Concert; Music in the Plaza monthly series; and Mariachi Mass.

THE MUSEUM SYSTEM

Las Cruces has three City museums as anchors in the ACD—Branigan Cultural Center (culture, history, historic preservation), Museum of Art (contemporary art), and the Museum of Nature and Science (stars, desert, ancient fossils). The museums are the anchors in the northern area of the ACD. They have changing exhibits on an on-going basis and plan two to three years in advance, which leads to collaborative opportunities for events, workshops, classes, visiting artists, and lectures.

Among 25 exhibits planned through 2021 that relate to the area's history and the Border Art and Culture asset are:

- *"Flamenco: From Spain to New Mexico"* explores the origins, influences, development, and appreciation of the respected art form on the world stage, June-September 2018, Branigan Cultural Center.
- *"Melding History and Art—The Bracero Program"* highlights the two-nation, United States and Mexico, program in 1942 through sculptures, paintings, and historic photographs, June-October 2018, Branigan Cultural Center.
- *"Birds in Art"* showcases international artists interpreting birds and related subject matter, in a juried exhibition organized and hosted by Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, Wisconsin, November 2018-January 2019, Museum of Art.

- *"Dolores Huerta: Revolution in the Fields/Revolución en los Campos"* explores the impact of Huerta's ground-breaking and successful farm workers movement in California in the 1960's and 70's. Huerta was born in New Mexico, still has family in Las Cruces, and has a charter middle school on Main Street named for her, May-August 2021, Branigan Cultural Center.

Each of these exhibitions lends itself to collaborative activities with community groups, ACD businesses, NMSU and Doña Ana Community College art, history, dance, and science departments as well as local schools from elementary to high school.

The *Flamenco: From Spain to New Mexico* exhibit serves as an example of integrating a variety of partnership activities in a three-day cultural package offered through Visit Las Cruces every weekend for a three-month period.

PROPOSED FLAMENCO: FROM SPAIN TO NEW MEXICO CULTURAL PACKAGE

Friday

- Arrive in Las Cruces mid morning
- Lodging available in either a home-based casita in the Mesquite neighborhood, local hotel, or the Heritage Complex at NMSU
- Lunch at one of two Mexican restaurants on El Camino Real; menu includes a Spanish torta, Spanish cheeses, olives, bread, and Sangria (menu choices created by the NMSU culinary arts program change every weekend)
- After lunch, a photo lecture at Nopalitos Gallery about El Camino Real and the Spanish influence in Southern New Mexico from the 1500's to 1800's. Then a tour of the Mesquite Street Historic Neighborhood highlighting architectural styles of homes of pioneer families that have Spanish/Mexican heritage. (Tour led by NMSU public history students, residents of the Mesquite Street neighborhood, and museum staff)
- Tour includes a stop at one of two galleries featuring a photo exhibit (Mesquite Art Gallery) or an exhibit of contemporary Hispanic artists (Unsettled Gallery). Both galleries exhibit art containing influences and themes of the historic and cultural impact of the Hispanic, Mexican, and Native American heritages of the area
- Evening Flamenco Friday, a live music/dance concert of performers and musicians from the NMSU professional flamenco dance company Sol y Aire and a dinner of Spanish tapas in the cabaret performance space at the Amador Hotel

Saturday

- Morning at the Farmers and Crafts Market with breakfast at one of the food trucks or restaurants on Main Street and visit to the flamenco exhibit at the Branigan Cultural Center
- Afternoon choice of 1) hikes to either La Cueva Hike and Real Story of the Italian hermit Monk Giovanni Maria de Agostini 2) Organ Mountains Desert Peak; 3) White Sands National Monument 4) Prehistoric Trackways National Monument (all include a picnic lunch)
- Evening free to explore the Las Cruces/Main Street nightlife

Sunday

- Brunch—choice of several restaurants in the ACD
- Afternoon interarts concert Imágenes de García Lorca, a flamenco dance/concert featuring the poetry of Spanish playwright and poet Garcia Lorca with backdrops of Spanish and New Mexico Hispanic images. Tapas, coffee, pastries at intermission at the historic Rio Grande Theatre on Main Street

Funding provided by Visit Las Cruces, New Mexico True, the Mexican Consulate, and NM Heritage Hotels.

Collaborative partnership ideas are endless and demonstrate how the anchors become the magnets to the vibrant arts and culture activities, events, and celebrations in the district. 🌸

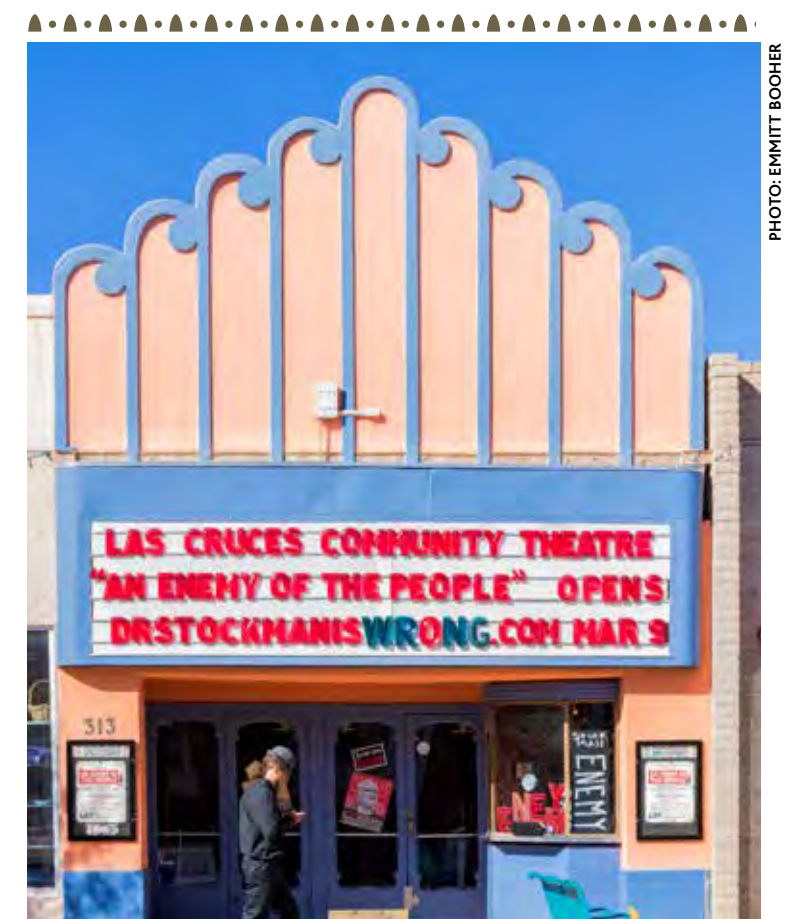


PHOTO: EMMITT BOOHER



AN ECOSYSTEM OF EXPERIENCES
PROMOTING A DAY IN THE DISTRICT

Imagine researching what to do in Las Cruces on the Visit Las Cruces website. Under “Deals and Packages” there is a headline that says:

EXPERIENCE THE LAS CRUCES ARTS AND CULTURAL DISTRICT

Choose three experiences to enjoy for \$95 with a bonus offer at the end of the day.



You find a catalog of experiences. It looks something like this:

EXPLORING ART

Jewelry Making

Learn a simple process for creating amazing earrings from copper wire and beads.

Beading

With the help of an expert beader, put together a bracelet or necklace to take home as a memento of your visit.

Ceramic Tiles

Explore design, and decorate a tile you can use as a trivet at home.

Papel Picado

Try your hand at cutting colored tissue paper in beautiful patterns and make a banner to take home.

HISTORY

Armijo House Visit

A glimpse into the lives of Las Cruces’ original families in a restored home on the State of New Mexico and the National Historic registries, now the office of the Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce.

Tea and Heritage

Visit the historic home of actress Doña Irene and learn about some of the founders of Las Cruces over a cup of tea with biscochos, a delicious regional cookie specialty.

A Walk Through History

With a local history enthusiast, take a 1 hour walk through the ACD, seeing historic homes and buildings.

CULINARY ARTS

The Art of Drinking Coffee

A lesson in coffee tasting and the effect of various roasting processes over a cup of coffee at Beck’s Coffee in a historic building in the heart of the Mesquite District.

Zeffiros

Visit Zeffiros for a demonstration of how to make the chef’s signature pizza.

SCIENCE AND NATURE

Nature Walk

Learn about desert plant life starting in the Museum of Science and Nature and go on a short walk to see desert plant life in the ACD.

WELLNESS

Introduction to Pilates

A one hour introduction to the Pilates Method.

Hatha Yoga

Intermediate Hatha Yoga: A one hour intermediate level class in Hatha Yoga.

And a calendar lists what is available on your dates:

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
10-11am: A Walk Through History, Meet @ Rio Grande Theatre	10-11am: Nature Walk @ Museum of Science and Nature	11am: The Art of Drinking Coffee @ Beck’s Coffee
1:30 - 2:30pm: Ceramic Tiles @ Museum of Art	11am - 12pm: Jewelry Making @ Museum of Art	11am - 12pm: Hatha Yoga @ Dwell
3-4pm: Tea and Heritage @ Doña Irene’s historic compound	1:30 - 2pm: Amador Home Visit	2-3pm: Visit Mesquite Historic Home Museum @ Klein Park
3-4pm: Pizza-making @ Zeffiros	2:30 - 3:30pm: Beading @ Museum of Art	3-4pm: Introduction to Pilates @ Pilates Studio
4-5pm: Beading @ Museum of Art	4-4:30pm: Theatre Short @ Community Theatre.	4-5pm: Papel Picado @ Museum of Art
5-6pm: Artist Reception @ ArtSpace Community Gallery	5-6pm: Free Hors d’oeuvres and a chat with a local artist @ ABC Restaurant	4-5pm: One free ice cream cone @ Main Street Ice Cream Parlour

When you pick up your ticket at Visit Las Cruces in the historic Rio Grande Theatre, you are given an orientation about the Arts and Cultural District, a map, and information about any changes to the schedule for that day. Each experience has a highly qualified teacher or guide sharing their specialized knowledge of the arts, culture and history of Las Cruces. Their training includes knowledge of all the experiences and where they take place, and they assist you, the visitor, to easily make your way from one experience to another. At the end of the day on Fridays and Saturdays, you are invited to gather with other ACD visitors to meet a local artist in a gallery or restaurant, have a small snack, and review the day's experiences.

EXPERIENTIAL TRAVEL

Research shows that "experiences" are valued over souvenirs by today's travelers. Eturbonews.com listed 12 travel trends for 2018; Experiential

Travel was third and Cultural Travel was fourth. The site noted, "For travelers today, travel is all about the people you meet and the experiences you have, and this will increase in 2018, and "...travelers are also looking at really getting close to a country's culture...travelers are increasingly tailoring their vacations around specific festivals, cultural hotspots, and unique experiences." (Viren Batra, Co-founder of Nirvana Travel, January 3, 2018, eturbonews.com)

In an article on Fortune.com, Greg Fisher of TripShock!, a travel booking service for Gulf Coast, is quoted saying, "Much of what consumers are looking for.. is driven by pressures created by social media...customers can instantaneously share their trips...There is a drive to compete..." He is further quoted saying that it's not about mementos and souvenirs, "It is the experience they are looking for." <http://fortune.com/2016/09/01/selling-experiences/>

LEVERAGE POINTS OF THE EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

"Experiences" as an entry point to the ACD has the advantage of offering something new to do each time a visitor returns to the district. It connects visitors with the community and promotes introductions to the area businesses. It makes the visitors feel valued as the local culture is shared with them and they have the opportunity to get to know a local experience guide. Experiences have the potential to keep the visitor in the district for many hours, with opportunities to contribute to the creative economy.

For the local community, the experience approach means that there are many opportunities for participation as part of the network of experience guides. The creative economy is built by keeping the visitors in the ACD area and encouraging them to walk from place to place, stopping in businesses as they go from one experience to the next.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- **Experience providers:** Artists, Arts Organizations, Neighborhood Residents, City of Las Cruces Agencies, Restaurants
- **Promotion and Marketing:** Visit Las Cruces, Hotels (which promote the Experience Program to guests and offer Experience tickets as part of packages)

POTENTIAL FUNDING

Governmental and foundation grants for creative placemaking. 🌸



PHOTO: BREE LAMB



PHOTO: EMMITT BOOHER



ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE
INSPIRING INVOLVEMENT IN THE DISTRICT

Artists in Residence are proposed as a way to inject ongoing new activity. These two examples serve to illustrate the excitement an artist can generate.

MURALIST IN RESIDENCE
ART ADVENTURE #1

Gallup Navajo and Chicano muralist Bernadette Begay is finishing a monumental 60'x40' mural on the west side of a downtown building featuring noted women from the original townsite of Las Cruces. As a six-month resident artist in the Arts and Culture District, Begay worked with NMSU art and public history students, historical organizations in the city, and the three district neighborhood groups to research, design, and implement the mural.

It was important for Begay to interject an indigenous presence into the mural to document the cultural diversity of the ACD. The finished artwork incorporates the landscape of the area, symbolic references of the cultures, and community icons. The women include a Piro, Manso, Tiwa Native American woman of the mid 1800's; Elizabeth Garrett, daughter of Pat Garrett and composer of the state song, O Fair New Mexico, in the early 1900's; Clara B. Williams, first African American to graduate from NMSU in 1937 and teacher at the only African American school, Booker T. Washington, in the City; Josephine Alma Gutierrez Smith, known as "Goody" and daughter

to Alberto Gutierrez and Leva Soto, pioneer merchant families of the ACD district. Goody and her husband Catrino Smith built a thriving construction business, and she was an active civic and educational leader in the late 1940's and 1950's.

The mural was dedicated March 8, 2020 with a week-long celebration organized by Begay with the help of other artists and the ACD Coordinating Council. Music, workshops, demonstrations, and food events highlighting customs, music composition, education, and entrepreneurial women's "pop ups" take place at various venues within the ACD throughout the week.

CHEF IN RESIDENCE
ART ADVENTURE #2

Award-winning international Chef Sergio Palermo has completed a year-long culinary arts residence in the ACD. He incorporated his Mexican and Italian heritage with the local food sources of chile, pecan, onions, and fresh food in season (cantaloupe and watermelons) as well as traditional family recipes from the different cultures in the original townsite. Palermo worked with culinary students from the Doña Ana Community College, the restaurants in the district, local farmers, and the NMSU Agronomy and Horticulture departments and Extension Service to experiment and test the recipes. He ran a pop-up restaurant in a space near City Hall. He conducted eight week-long food workshops throughout 2021. The workshops were timed to correspond with the four seasons and the different harvests of each of the seasons. In conjunction with the workshops, local farmers traveled around the district in horse-drawn carriages or trucks with

the local produce of the season. This was a historical reference to the local and valley farmers who used to take their produce directly to the residents in horse-drawn carriages, down the historic Camino Real.

To celebrate the residency, the district will have a week-long Food Fest with all the restaurants in the district featuring the recipes, cooking demonstrations, food tastings from charred peppers to pecan pizzas, and “dining-as-learning” opportunities about the district’s families and their recipes. Palermo will publish a cookbook of the recipes with the photography of area photographers who documented the process and photographed the finished food products. Proceeds of the cookbook will benefit future artist in residence programs in the ACD. The residency is funded by the New Mexico Restaurant Association, New Mexico True, and the New Mexico Office of Cultural Affairs. The photographers’ time was sponsored by an anonymous donor. Printing of the book is underwritten by a private foundation.

These artist in residence scenarios are fictional examples of what can occur when a professional artist works in the community. An artist in residence program is critical to the “arts ecosystem” of the ACD. The program will bring together public art, community cultural exchange and participation, and a structured time for artist reflection and experimentation.

The Las Cruces ACD artist residency will include all art forms—visual, performing, literary, culinary, academic, agricultural, architectural, digital/ media/film, and historic preservation. The time frame can be from one week to one year depending on the end product. A guest artist works in a new environment, often away from the restrictions and pressures of everyday life, and develops work and creatively explores new ideas. The artist could be local or from outside the city depending on the needs. The residency provides lodging, travel, materials, equipment as needed, and a stipend. Las Cruces would be the first city in the state to develop an ongoing artist in residence program. An artist in residence committee would create the topic residency and develop the criteria for artist selection with the leadership of the City Art Board and the City Museum system.

POTENTIAL FUNDING

Foundation grants, City of Las Cruces, corporate sponsorships, New Mexico True, New Mexico Arts, New Mexico Restaurant Association. 🌻



PHOTO: EMMITT BOOHER

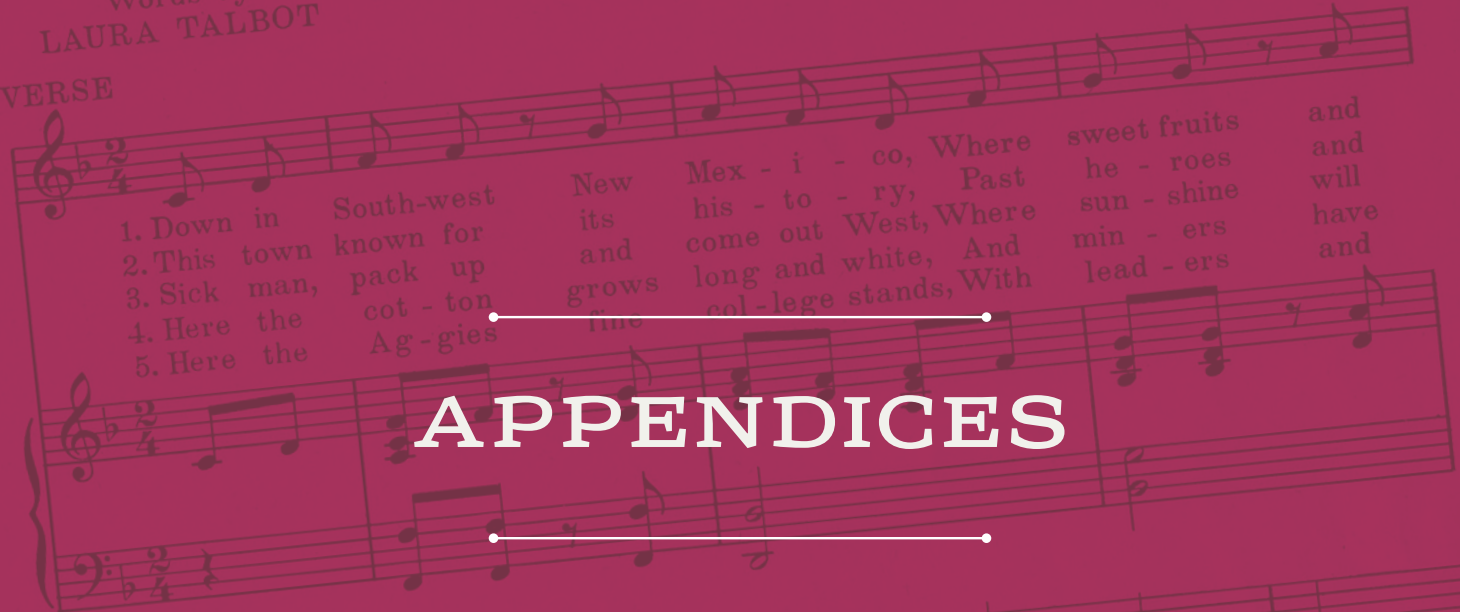
Las Cruces, Las Cruces

To my 9 children, my 20 grandchildren, my 20 great-grandchildren and all my dear friends in the fine City of Las Cruces and the Mesilla Valley. Laura Talbot

Music by
JACK STOVER

Words by
LAURA TALBOT

VERSE



APPENDICES

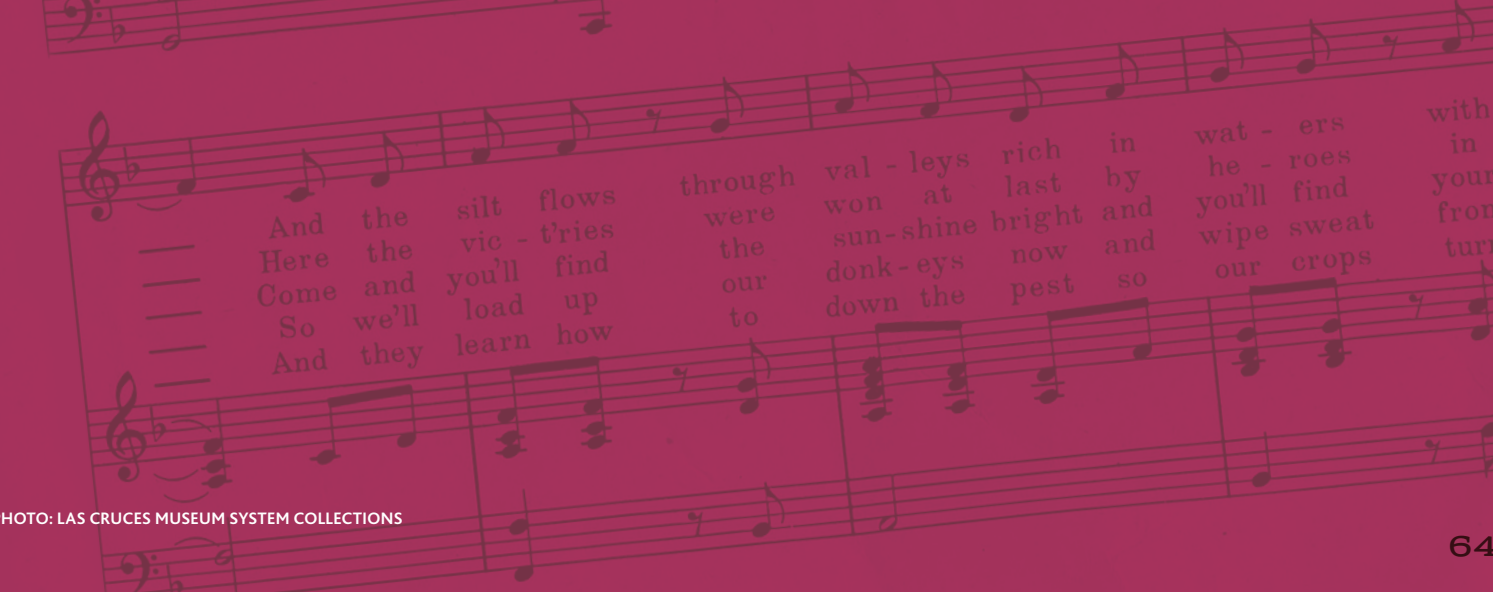
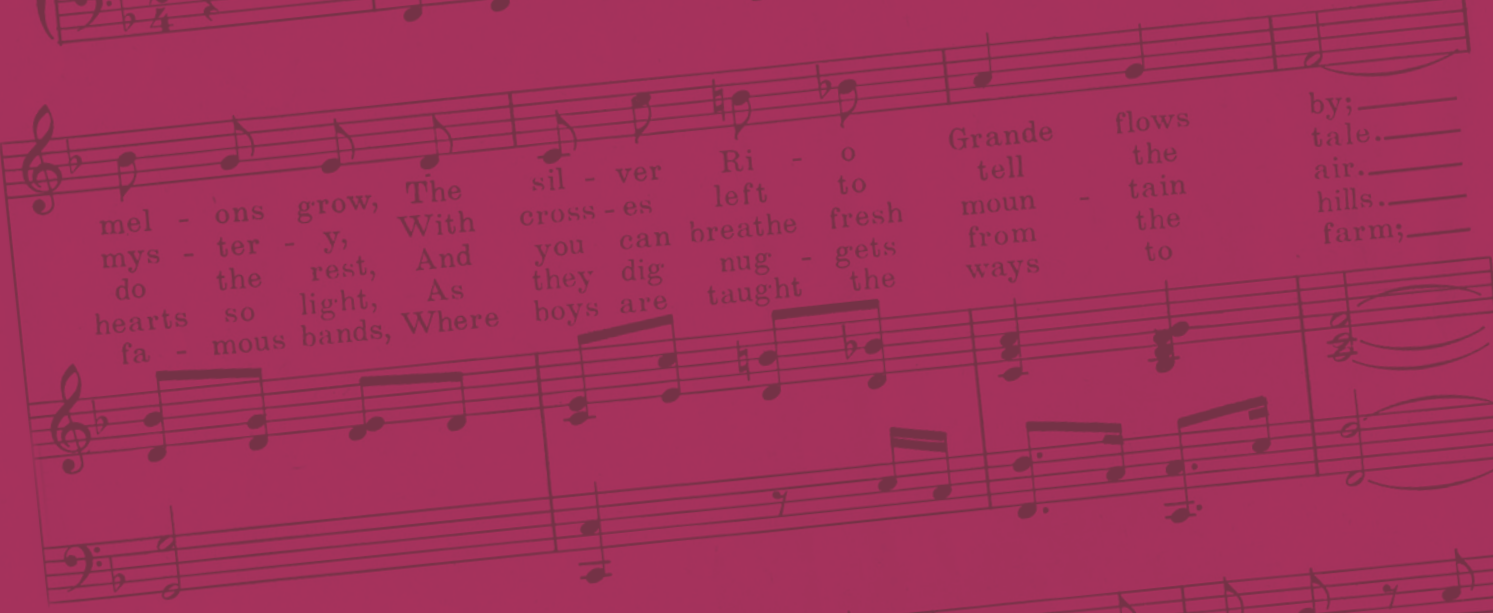


PHOTO: LAS CRUCES MUSEUM SYSTEM COLLECTIONS



DEFINITIONS

ARTS AND CULTURAL DISTRICT COORDINATING COUNCIL

A local ACD Coordinating Council (Council) is the local governing body for programs, projects, activities, and events. It must have as a member an Arts Council which supports the broader interests of other arts organizations, artists and cultural entrepreneurs, and a revitalization program (such as MainStreet), and the municipality or, when a proposed district does not sit within the boundary of an incorporated Municipality, a County or Tribal government, as core members of the Council.

Other organizations should be represented on the Council whose interests and participation shall be for the development of the cultural economy and creative industries within the district including but not limited to, arts and cultural non-profits, cultural and educational institutions, organizations devoted to the humanities and historic preservation. (New Mexico Arts and Cultural District Policy)

BORDER ART AND CULTURE

An exciting international mix of artistic and cultural expression produced in the North American Borderplex that encompasses Las Cruces, El Paso and Cd. Juarez.

CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

Creative placemaking is an evolving field of practice that intentionally leverages the power of the arts, culture, and creativity to serve a community's interest while driving a broader agenda for change, growth, and transformation in a way that also builds character and quality of place. (Artscape)

In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, nonprofit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, tribe, city, or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired. (Ann Markusen and Ann Gadwa)

CREATIVE ECONOMY

This economy, based in a wide array of creative industries, addresses the financial/resource development, investments, and outcomes that utilize arts and cultural assets and imaginative qualities as economic development systems. It highlights the creative talent of individuals and the creation of intellectual property. Assets include: arts and cultural businesses, entrepreneurs, organizations, events, festivals, artists, real estate, restaurants, museums, and galleries.

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Advertising, Animation, Architecture, Artisans, Crafts, Culinary, All types of Design fields, Fashion, Film, Museum, Music, Performing Arts, Publishing, Research and Development, Software, Toys and Games, TV and Radio, Visual Arts.

CULTURAL COMPOUNDS

A cohesive group of historic buildings and or cultural facilities owned publicly or privately, which contribute to the understanding of a community or region's culture and heritage. (NM Arts and Cultural District Act)

CULTURAL INSTITUTION

A publicly or privately owned facility accessible by the public, which provides opportunities for expressing, interpreting, conserving or preserving the culture and heritage of a community or region. (NM Arts and Cultural District Act)

EXPERIENCE-BASED TOURISM

This is a set of activities in which individuals engage on their personal terms, such as pleasant and memorable places, allowing each tourist to build his or her own travel experiences so that these satisfy a wide range of personal needs, from pleasure to a search for meaning. (Idea Group, Inc.)

LAS CRUCES ORIGINAL TOWNSITE

The boundaries of the original townsite were Piñon Ave. on the north; Soledad Ave. on the south; Water Street on the west; and Tornillo Street on the east. It included 84 blocks with a center block for the church and another for a cemetery.

POP UPS

A temporary business that literally pops-up for a short time frame to retail products or services. The pop up phenomena is developing throughout the country in both urban and rural settings. It started when artists needed a temporary space for exhibits or performances and now has grown to include all types of business and retail items as well as many types of artisanal food production. Pop ups are usually found in empty or underused spaces and are time limited from an afternoon, a day, or sometimes longer for more creative and experimental projects and products.

MAKERSPACES

A collaborative work space where people gather to create, invent, learn, explore, and share a variety of art or industrial forms. The space usually has equipment that an entrepreneur, artist, or student can use like 3D printers, laser cutter, soldering irons, sewing machines, craft and art equipment and hardware, software, and electronics. The space is usually large and industrial looking and can be free, or charge a minimal cost to use. Makerspaces are becoming very popular in artistic and creative areas around the country. The spaces allow for creativity to flourish using methods/equipment/techniques not available in personal studios or work spaces.

PHOTO: SUSANA PARRA, LC HISTORIC DISTRICTS

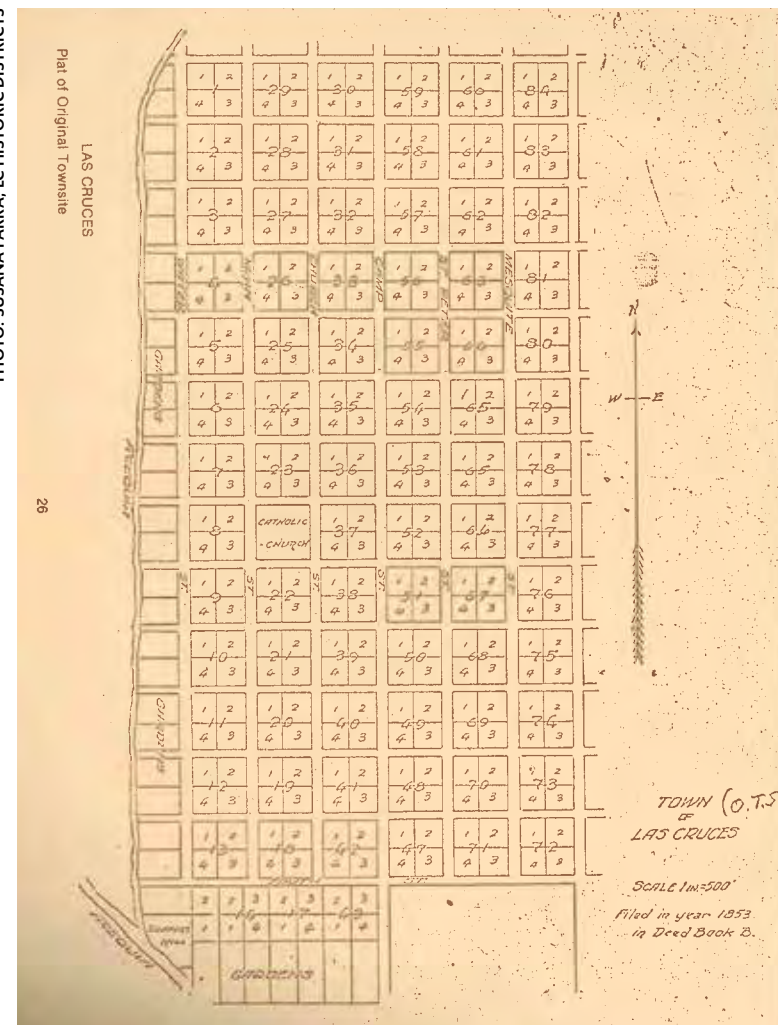


PHOTO: LAS CRUCES SUN NEWS, SEPT. 1959





PHOTO: EMMITT BOOHER



A LIVING LEGACY

By Irene Oliver-Lewis

February 2018

Reflecting on how Main Street and the surrounding historic neighborhoods are evolving to once again be a very desirable place to live and be a part of our community takes me back to my childhood and a lifestyle that people are seeking today.

I live in our family compound that dates back to 1901 in the Mesquite Street Historic District.

It wasn't called a district when I was a kid. It was just the neighborhood. A neighborhood filled with family stories dating back to the start of the town.

My earliest recognition of peace, love, nurturing, and family was at our kitchen table—morning times with my father and mother in the early 1950's. My brothers and sisters gone. Their energies of sharing one bathroom for seven people, of packing school lunches, or grabbing their misplaced homework for their teachers at Holy Cross School on Main Street, had walked out the front door. What remained was serenity—my time—because I was the baby in the family—la niña. I had the honor of staying at home in the warmth and delicious smells of breakfast and homemade tortillas.

Mom was the best cook. Her taquitos, biscochos, and red chile were favorites at family gatherings. She would give away her red chile as presents because people loved it so much. Dad was the best woodworker and carpenter. He could fix or make anything. He was like most of the men in the neighborhood that were self sufficient and enterprising with whatever material was around. They were "recycling" before it was trendy.

My grandmother was a gardener. She watered her dirt, ocotillos, mesquite trees, and succulents, and was "xeriscaping" before it was given a name. She also grew vegetables and colorful flowers that I used for decorations on my mud pies. She always had fresh yerba buena (spearmint) for our medicinal needs.

When urban renewal in 1967 almost destroyed our neighborhood, mother's cousins and sisters sold their properties and moved away. They said she was foolish to stay in the old neighborhood. But mother loved the neighborhood and refused to leave. As dad watched the destruction of the adobe homes and businesses in the seven blocks from Main Street to Campo, he became more determined to maintain our homes. Sixty-two of the 84 blocks of the original townsite were razed. Everyday, as I enjoy my family compound, I thank my mom and dad for their wisdom to stay in the neighborhood.

The Fitch-Oliver Compound started with two, four-room adobe homes built in 1901. In 1945 my mother's parents gave my parents the main house facing the street as a wedding present. Dad renovated the four-room adobe into a three-bedroom house with in-door plumbing and centralized heating and cooling. Later renovations of the entire compound were led by my sister Sylvia and my dad.

As I grew older I realized our neighborhood was one of three sections in the town and each had a distinctive character.

MY NEIGHBORHOOD: ADOBE HOMES, SMALL BUSINESSES, AND A DIVERSE POPULATION

My neighborhood has small to medium-size adobe homes with flat or tin roofs. The homes are right up to the sidewalk. When I was young, the yards were in the back of the homes with dirt, lots of flowers, plants, and vegetable gardens. We didn't have many paved streets. We loved it when it rained hard because we were on the path of the arroyos and the water would pile up in front of our homes and we could go out and play in the water.

Looking back, I realize that we were maintaining the legacy of the businesses started in the 1850's on Mesquite Street, the original trading route of the Camino Real. My aunt had one of the larger grocery stores stocked with fresh meat daily. Every block had its specialty "mom and pop" businesses and everyone knew where to go to get underwear, pan dulce, vegetables, watch repair, or other goods or luxuries like specialty confections/candies that the children saved their pennies to buy. In today's terms, they were live/work spaces, with the families living in the back of the house.

Our neighborhood maintained the multi-cultural population that started in the original townsite. Although I played with mostly Hispanic/Mexican friends, I also had friends that were Jewish, German, or Anglo. As la niña, it seemed everyone was welcomed in the neighborhood. The only thing we worried about was "la migra," who would show up unexpectedly looking for the Mexican workers that were our neighbors or who worked in our homes or businesses.

THE ALAMEDA NEIGHBORHOOD: LARGE HOMES AND GREEN LAWN

The houses were bigger, pretty, and made of brick or wood with pitched roofs. But the most interesting aspect of the Alameda neighborhood was their lawns. We didn't have lawns. We had dirt. The Alameda lawns were big, green, and the houses were away from the street.

Sometimes after school, we would walk on Las Cruces Avenue to the park to see if we could peek into the Holy Cross nuns' house to see how they lived. We wanted to see if they had hair under their head coverings.

The park had grass while Klein Park, in our neighborhood, had dirt. This neighborhood didn't have businesses in their homes. It was magical to me.

MAIN STREET AND DOWNTOWN: BUSINESS, SCHOOL, AND CHURCH

Separating the neighborhoods was Main Street and downtown. It was the neutral space in the city where everyone went to shop, go to the movies, eat at special restaurants, go to the bank, or do business at city hall. And when you were a teenager, it was cruising time on Main Street with stops at the Shamrock Drive-in for a coke and hamburger.

PHOTO: LAS CRUCES MUSEUM SYSTEM COLLECTIONS





ARTS AND CULTURAL DISTRICT ASSETS

MAIN STREET/DOWNTOWN

ARTS AND CULTURE

Museums: Branigan Cultural Center, Museum of Art, Museum of Nature and Science

Theatres: Black Box and No Strings Theatre Company, LC Community Theatre, Rio Grande Theatre

Galleries: Aralia Gallery, Atom Bomb Studio, Blu Ant Contemporary Gallery, Cottonwood Gallery at SWEC, Harmony Gallery and Boutique, M. Phillips Gallery, Mas Art Gallery and Frame Shop, Quillin Studio and Gallery, Raven Art Gallery, Tony Avalos/ABC Printing, WendysART

Music: Studio A-440, White's Music Store

Arts Organizations: Artists Guild of Southern New Mexico, Foundation for Las Cruces Museums

Thomas Branigan Memorial Library

Just outside the ACD: Justus Wright Galleria

RESTAURANTS

575, The Amador, Broken Spoke Tap House, Carrillo's Café, Day's Hamburgers Since 1932, Dragonfly, Jax Rooftop, Little Toad Creek Brewery & Distillery, Rosie's, Sugies Diner, Zeffiro

ARTS RELATED BUSINESSES

ABC Printing, Celebrate Hall and Event Center, COAS Books, Downtown Florist, Dwell Yoga and Juice Center, Downtown Las Cruces Partnership, Emporium, Eyeconik Records and Apparel, Farmers and Crafts Market on Wednesdays and Saturdays, Friends-Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks, Green Chamber of Commerce, Insta-Copy, Las Cruces Downtown Partnership, Las Cruces Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, MEW and Company, Organ Mountain Outfitters, Southwest Creative Co., Southwest Expeditions, The Spa Downtown, Tu Media Group

HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Amador Hotel, Branigan Cultural Center, Camunez Building, Las Cruces Community Theatre, Old Post Office, Rio Grande Theatre, various buildings on Main Street

Outside the ACD but still in the original historic townsite: Armijo House (on Lohman, one block from the ACD and offices of the Las Cruces Greater Chamber of Commerce)

MESQUITE STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

ARTS AND CULTURE

Galleries: Camino Fine Art, Mesquite Art Gallery, Las Cruces Art Association at Nopalitos Galeria, Unsettled Gallery and Studio

Theatre: Black Box Theatre Rehearsal Studio

RESTAURANTS

Beck's Coffee and Creamery, La Nueva Casita, Nopalitos, Rasco's BBQ

ARTS RELATED BUSINESSES

Camino Tattoo, Casa Camino Real (books), Real Inx Tattoo Studio, Peebs & Oli Furniture, La Semilla Food Center

HISTORIC BUILDINGS/LOCATIONS

El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (Mesquite Street), Klein Park

Outside the ACD but still in the historic registered original townsite district: Entrada del Sol Tile Mural, Jardin de Mesquite Tile Mural, Phillips Chapel, some 200 houses and homes of pioneer families designated as historic by the National Register of Historic Buildings, New Dimensions Art Works

The most important aspect of Main Street for la niña was St. Genevieve's and Holy Cross School. Everyone in my family went to Holy Cross. My cousins were there. I was a cheerleader for the basketball team. I loved my time there, even though I couldn't read because I had dyslexia (which no one knew at the time). The nun in first grade thought I would eventually learn to read if she just hit my hands with a ruler. It didn't work.

I was so proud that my school and church were on Main Street, the center and gathering place in town. The Holy Cross students would go to the Rio Grande and State Theatres to see a movie for our field trips. Our library was the Branigan Library (now the Branigan Cultural Center). After school my cousins, my friends, and I would walk home on Main Street and window shop.

When we had some extra change we would stop at the Rexall Drug for french fries and a coke. Life was calm, safe, and happy. Many of the store owners knew our parents or our relatives worked in the stores. We walked everywhere. I had everything I needed in my neighborhood and on Main Street.

When I was six years old my sister Elizabeth was named queen of our neighborhood fiesta at Klein Park. It was an exciting time for her and a coveted honor for our family.

To win the position of queen she had to collect the most money. It took months to collect the coins we got in the jars with her picture that we put in all the businesses in the neighborhood.

The whole neighborhood worked on the fiesta decorating the booths; cooking and selling their delicious food; designing the booth activities like balloon and darts, ring toss, go fish, and the ever-favorite penny pitch. Mariachi music and rock and roll bands played throughout the weekend event.

Today, when I go to Klein Park, my memory quickly lapses into the sounds, smells, and visions of the fiesta. Mom sold taquitos and raspadas (snow cones) and dad ran his self designed, penny-pitch board. I thought I was so important and grown-up because I was my dad's assistant. He would give me some cash to go buy a hamburger and Coke. I didn't want the taquitos mom made. I wanted the gringo food.

The year my sister was queen we didn't have the booths. We enjoyed being the queen's family entourage. We picked out her gown, sent her to the beauty parlor, and bought her the most beautiful shoes I had ever seen. I felt like she was a real queen and we were lucky to be her family. It was a special time in the neighborhood.

I sleep in the room where my grandmother and mother died. Our family compound is filled with their spirits, the furniture my father made, and historic homes he renovated. I can hear the stories they told and songs they sang when I was little. Family stories are like shadows, a part of you wherever you go. They echo our lives and ensure that we remember from generation to generation. And they echo in our Mesquite Street neighborhood—a living legacy of 169 years and counting—echoing through the adobe walls and welcoming the possibilities of a rejuvenated Main Street and Mesquite Street neighborhood. 🌻

REFERENCES | *Las Cruces, New Mexico: 1849-1999 Multicultural Crossroads* by Gordon Owen | *Historical Las Cruces: The Story of Las Cruces and the Mesilla Valley* by Christopher Schurtz | *Las Cruces: An Illustrated History* by Linda G. Harris | *Las Cruces and Doña Ana County: A Pictorial History* by The Bulletin, Sesquicentennial Edition | *Las Cruces: A Photographic Journey, New Mexico Centennial 1912-2012* by The Las Cruces Bulletin | *Mesquite Historic District: El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail* by National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior | <https://lascrucesblog.com/history/2007/las-cruces-worst-mistake/> | *Las Cruces: Crossroads of History*, Branigan Cultural Center http://www.las-cruces.org/code/history_exhibit/settlingValley.html



ELIZABETH CAMUNEZ OLIVER (right) was selected as queen of the Pan-American Fiesta at Klein park yesterday. The new queen will represent Las Cruces in the 16th of September celebration scheduled in Chihuahua City. Pictured with Miss Oliver from left to right are Bennie Allimiano, Jr., and Fiesta Princesses Mary Nevarez and Olivia Hinojosa. (Photo by Elby)



PLANNING PROCESS SEPTEMBER 2017–APRIL 2018

10 DAYS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/RESEARCH/ LISTENING EVENTS

- September 25–27, 2017
- October 18–21, 2017
- December 11–13, 2017
- April 21, 2018

Number of Participants: 362

TYPES OF MEETINGS/ LISTENING SESSIONS

- **Large group:** 8 or more people
11 sessions
- **Small group:** 7 to 2 people
11 sessions
- **One person**
14 sessions

CATEGORIES OF PARTICIPANTS

- City Administration and Staff
- Neighborhood Residents
- Community Residents
- Artists and Art Business Owners
- Non Profit Organizations
- Business Owners—Main Street and Mesquite Street
- City Councilors and Mayor
- Arts and Culture Professionals
- Chambers of Commerce
- NMSU Faculty and Staff
- Doña Ana Arts Council
- Downtown Las Cruces Partnership
- Next Generation/Young Arts Professionals
- Arts and Cultural Coordinating Council
- Visitors

OUTCOMES OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/MEETINGS/ LISTENING SESSIONS

More than 1000 comments on a variety of topics—Events, Collaboration and Regional Partnerships, Streetscape/Use of Buildings, Business and Economic Development, Artist Live/Work Spaces, Food-Entertainment-Retail Ideas, Funding, Hours, Perception, Historic Significance and Preservation, Youth Activities and Education, Tourism, and Miscellaneous.

Stakeholder meetings were held to seek further comment and involvement by organizations suggested as collaborators by the public and to plan for participation in implementation of the ACD Plan by major organizations.

PARTICIPANT LIST

The following people attended meetings and open houses in 2017-2018, contributing their time, expertise and experience to the ACD Plan. Their comments and ideas were invaluable. We extend apologies to anyone who may have been inadvertently left off the list.

Chris Adams	Rebecca Courtney	Frank Hernandez	Katy Milligan	Dayna Serpa
Dolores Archuleta	David Cristiani	Russell Hernandez	Debbie Moore	Christopher Schaljo
Armando Arellano	Robert Cruise	Roger Hedrick	Linda J. Moore	Stephanie Preciado
Joey Avalos	Robert Cummins	Aurelia Holliman	Jim Murphy	Shelton
Diana Ayres	John Darden	Bobbie Hutson	Steve Newby	Chris Shelton
Dean Ayres	Joie Diaz	Faith Hutson	Marcel Nicolitz	Nathan Small
Jennifer Bales	David Dollahan	Wilma Hutson	John Northcutt	David Sorenson
Christina Ballew	Trina Dunbar	Keith Johnson	Anahy Nunez	Leticia Soto
Joe Barela	Penny Dunclee	Arif Khan	Ramon Olivas	Ray Soular
Julia Barello	Chris Faiver	Bill Kolbin	Abby Osborne	Megan Sowell
Srijana Basnyat	Georjeanna Feltha	Glenn Lander	Arianna Parsons	Michael Stephens
Scott Breckner	Cathie Fern	Elizabeth H. Lannert	Tim Pitts	Mel Stone
Frank Belyan	Beverly Chavez Floyd	Josie Lannert	Bob Pofahl	Maria Stops
Malu Bender	Freda Firefly Flores	Beth LeBlanc	Danielle Prewitt	Terri Sugarman
Sandra Bender	Susan Frary	Kay Lilley	Mary Helen Ratje	J. Paul Taylor
Jean Berlowitz	Meg G. Freyermuth	David G. LoConto	Barbara Reasoner	Lizz Taylor
Margaret Bernstein	Andrew Gallegos	Dennis Lujan	Shannon Reynolds	Kevin Tegmeyer
Mark Bleiweiss	Victor Gallegos	Diana Lyon	Eric Rivera	Jim Turrentine
Pat Bonneau-White	Dennis Giever	Bill Kolbin	Deret Roberts	Aaron Valenzuela
Emmitt Booher	Joy Goldbaum	Susan McNeill	Martha Rodriguez	Joe Vargas
Meg Brauckmann	Eva Gomez	Paul Mach	Kathie Rogers	Michelle Valverde
Craig Buchanan	George Griffin	Randi Maddox	Susie Rossman	Curtis Verploegh
Candice Butler	Emily Guerra	David Maestas	Rick Rotante	John Verploegh
Brian Byrd	Sally Quillin	Michael Mandel	Ed Roybal	Jim Vorenberg
Ernie Campos	Mandy Guss	Linda Marina	Ann Rubin	David Weir
Sylvia Camunez	Carrie Hamblen	Griselda Martinez	Abraham Sanchez	Victor Whitmill
Mark Cio-Ortega	Kimberly Hanson	Lorrie Meeks	Philip San Filippo	Ivan White
Abel Chavarria	Neil Harvey	Austin Milbourn	Elaine Sasnow	Carol Winkler
Judy Chavarria	Patti Havstad	Joy Miller	David Sedillo	

Some 300 community members also attended a February 2016 open house at Munson Senior Center to discuss the possible boundaries of the proposed arts and cultural district. We want to acknowledge those individuals who offered their comments, which led to the decision of the boundaries and location of the ACD.

The last public meeting was April 21, 2018 during Farmers and Crafts Market, at the Rio Grande Theatre. Large posters displaying the Draft Vision and Goals and hand-outs of the Draft Action Plan were shared to elicit public comment. Suggestions were included in the final ACD Plan to the City Art Board and the City Council.



PHOTO: MIKE COOK



ARTS AND CULTURAL DISTRICT FUNDING SOURCES

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

CITY SOURCES

Business Improvement District

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

General Obligation Bonds

Gross Receipts Tax Set-asides

Local Economic Development Act (LEDA)

- Grants for Fixed Asset Improvements
- Forgivable Loan Fund - Building Renovation Projects
- Local Option Gross Receipts Tax (LOGRT)

Lodgers Tax - Advertising and Promotion

Tax Incentives

TIF/TIDD (Tax Increment Financing/Tax Increment Development District) – Infrastructure development and improvement; TIF allowed under Metropolitan Redevelopment Act

STATE SOURCES

New Mexico Economic Development Department/ Arts and Cultural District and MainStreet

- New Mexico Arts and Cultural District Grants
- Cultural Facilities Funding

New Mexico Local Economic Development Act

New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority

- Low Income Housing Tax Credits
- New Market Tax Credits

New Mexico Historic District Tax Credits (An ACD in a Historic District can increase the tax credit to 50%.)

- Building Restoration Projects

New Mexico True

- Tourism Advertising and Promotion

New Mexico Arts

<http://nmarts.org/grants/>

New Mexico Arts funds nonprofits and governmental organizations for arts activities in the following discipline areas: performing arts, visual arts, literary arts, media arts, multidisciplinary arts (involving more than one artistic discipline), and interdisciplinary arts (relating two or more artistic disciplines). We support programs that foster arts education, arts economic development; performing and visual arts, and contemporary and traditional folk arts in New Mexico.

FEDERAL SOURCES

Department of Housing and Urban Development

Department of Transportation

Department of Commerce

Environmental Protection Agency

Department of Justice

Department of Agriculture

Tax Credits, Promise Zones, Consolidated Plans, Long Range Transportation Plans, and Asset Management Plans, Historic Preservation Tax Incentives

Institute of Museum and Library Services

<https://www.ims.gov/grants>

National Endowment for the Arts

<https://www.arts.gov/grants/apply-for-a-grant>

GRANT PROGRAMS

Artplace

<https://www.artplaceamerica.org/about/introduction>

ArtPlace America (ArtPlace) is a ten-year collaboration among a number of foundations, federal agencies, and financial institutions that works to position arts and culture as a core sector of comprehensive community planning and development in order to help strengthen the social, physical, and economic fabric of communities.

Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico

<http://www.communityfoundationofsouthernnewmexico.com>

El Paso Community Foundation

<https://epcf.org>

Kresge Foundation

<https://kresge.org/programs/arts-culture-0>

We focus on Creative Placemaking, an approach to community development and urban planning that integrates arts, culture, and community-engaged design strategies. Kresge’s unique niche in Creative Placemaking is our commitment to influence community development-related systems and practices that expand opportunities for low-income people in disinvested communities in American cities.

McCune Charitable Foundation

<http://nmmccune.org>

Save America’s Treasures

<https://www.nps.gov/preservation-grants/sat/>

The Federal Save America’s Treasures grants program began in 1999 and helps preserve nationally significant historic properties and collections that convey our nation’s rich heritage to future generations of Americans.

Transportation for America

<http://t4america.org/our-vision/>

COMMUNITY/ LOCAL BUSINESSES

Possible sources of grants for specific aspects such as programs, events, fairs, etc.

Blue Cross Blue Shield – community grants

<https://www.bcbsnm.com/company-info/community-involvement/community-giving>

Citizens Bank Las Cruces – sponsorships

<https://www.citizenslc.com/about-us/community-involvement>

El Paso Electric – grants and sponsorships

<https://www.epelectric.com/community/community-partner-program>

First New Mexico Bank

<https://online.firstnewmexicobanklc.com/Pages/ContactUs.html>

One Source Federal Credit Union

<https://www.onesourcefcu.org/membership/about-osfcu>

US Bank – community sponsorship and grants

<https://www.usbank.com/community/community-possible-grant-program.aspx>

<https://www.usbank.com/community/charitable-giving.aspx>

White Sands Federal Credit Union – sponsorships

<https://www.wsfcu.org/community-involvement/>



“MUNICIPALLY DESIGNATED” DISTRICT POLICY FOR NEW MEXICO ARTS & CULTURAL DISTRICTS

AN ARTS & CULTURAL DISTRICT (ACD), THAT IS CREATED WITHIN A MUNICIPALITY OF OVER 50,000

in population under the Arts and Cultural District Act of 2007 as a District, and wishes to pursue the benefits of ACD network status from the agency and organizational members of the Arts & Cultural Distract State Council with the State-Authorized Arts & Cultural District Program, will follow and implement the policies and procedures that are adopted by the State Arts & Cultural District Council and accepted by the New Mexico Arts Commission.

Contingent upon funding, such benefits may include technical assistance services and resources as each agency and organization chooses to commit on an annual basis.

Municipally Designated Arts & Cultural Districts, to be accepted into the state network must include the following program elements:

- A local Arts & Cultural District Coordinating Council (Council) comprised of representative members including Arts Council representative(s) and supporting the arts, arts, historic and cultural institutions, agencies and organizations, a municipal government representative, and representation from a downtown or commercial neighborhood revitalization organization such as MainStreet.
- The Council should have paid staff to support the local ACD organization's planning, projects, activities and programs.
- A municipally adopted ACD Cultural Economic Development Plan for the ACD District guiding

the growth of the Districts Cultural Economy and prioritizing the work of the local Arts & Cultural District Coordinating Council.

- An ACD municipally adopted district Master Plan/Metropolitan Redevelopment Plan (MRA) to guide priority cultural economic development infrastructure and capital improvement projects which result in the growth of the cultural economy within the district.
- A walkable ACD District with established boundaries for resources and services to be delivered and programming implemented by the local ACD Council.
- A walkable district/compound boundary will be approved with municipal adoption of the ACD district Cultural Plan by the local governing body to

be eligible for resources, services and state historic preservation tax credit benefits.

- Annual economic and organizational performance standards to measure investment impacts into the ACD.
- An understanding that all state services, benefits and incentives are for the purposes of the ACD district in growing the cultural economy.

Municipally designated programs which have implemented the policies, procedures and tasks defined by the State ACD Council for State Authorized Districts, may correspond by letter to the State ACD Coordinator and request consideration to be State Authorized by the New Mexico Arts Commission at its next duly constituted meeting.

02-04-15





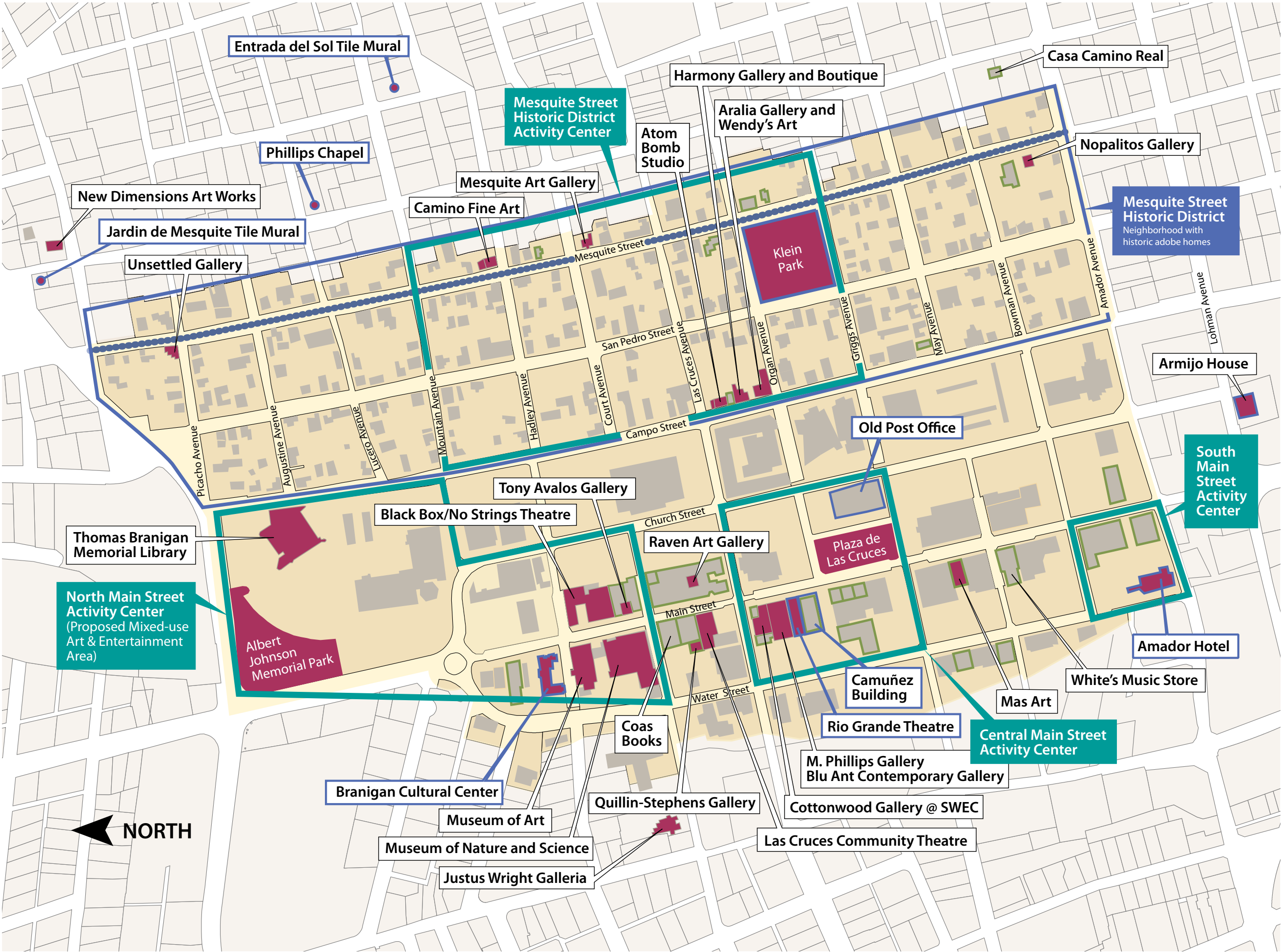
LAS CRUCES
ARTS AND
CULTURAL
DISTRICT MAP

KEY

- ACD Boundary
- ACD Activity Centers
- Cultural Assets
- Historic Buildings/Sites
- Restaurants and Arts-related Businesses
- El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Historic Trading Route

See Appendix 3: Arts & Cultural District Cultural Assets

Map courtesy of Placemakers, LLC and City of Las Cruces Economic Development Department



NORTH



*You are invited to collaborate on making
the Las Cruces Arts and Cultural District
“the creative heart of our city”...*

- ▶ attend concerts and festivals
- ▶ eat at the variety of restaurants
- ▶ go shopping
- ▶ schedule an event at the Plaza de Las Cruces
- ▶ create a family field trip to the museums
- ▶ start a business in the ACD
- ▶ live in an historic house in the Mesquite Street Historic District
- ▶ take your out of town guests on an ACD arts adventure

The success of a vibrant ACD can only happen with **YOUR** participation. Help gather the community by spreading the word to your friends about interesting things happening in the ACD.

If you find an action in Chapter 2 that you’re inspired to help with, get in touch with the partners noted on the back cover. New ideas are also welcome.

This Arts and Cultural District Plan was created through community member participation. We invite **YOUR** energy, talent, and partnership in realizing the goals. Embrace the ACD in a way that works for you as an arts and culture producer, consumer, fan, or advocate.

Arts and Cultural District Coordinating Council
Sabrina Pratt and Irene Oliver-Lewis, SVPratt Creative Strategies

PHOTO: VISIT LAS CRUCES

COVER PHOTOS (L TO R): (TOP) EMMITT BOOHER (2), BREE LAMB. (MIDDLE) LAS CRUCES MUSEUM SYSTEM COLLECTIONS,
COURT YOUTH CENTER, BREE LAMB. (BOTTOM) VISIT LAS CRUCES, EMMITT BOOHER (2)



CITY OF LAS CRUCES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

700 N. Main Street, Las Cruces, NM 88001 | (575) 528-3477 | econdev@las-cruces.org

CITY OF LAS CRUCES QUALITY OF LIFE DEPARTMENT

Museum System | City Art Board

411 N. Main Street, Las Cruces, NM 88001 | (575) 541-2296 | bcc@las-cruces.org

**DOWNTOWN LAS CRUCES PARTNERSHIP /
ARTS AND CULTURAL DISTRICT COORDINATING COUNCIL**

138 S. Water, Las Cruces, NM 88001 | (575) 525-1955 | director@dlcp.org

DOÑA ANA ARTS COUNCIL

1740 Calle De Mercado, Las Cruces, NM 88005 | (575) 523-6403 | admin@daarts.org

VISIT LAS CRUCES

336 S. Main Street, Las Cruces, NM 88001 | (575) 541-2444 | cvb@lascrucescvb.org